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The Traditional Games of Basotho Children:

a fragment of Sotho oral traditions and
their significance for the development
of a written literature.

A Thesis by

Joshua Rawley Masiea

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FOREWORD.

O.1 The purpose of this study is to take a fresh look at the traditional lore as an organic whole and to re-create this organic whole as containing the foundations of all oral lore. These games are certainly a part of oral lore that has been neglected and not seriously considered as part of S. Sotho literature. In the following chapters an attempt has been made to illustrate, or rather to establish this fact. These games have successfully submitted themselves to the linguistic and the literary tests, and no doubt should still exist about their value to the whole of S. Sotho language.

O.2 It will be noted that all the games have one thing in common namely, that they are noisy vocalised and verbalised, and that they are accompanied by much talk.....talk of a formalised nature, it is true in some cases, but nevertheless talk that allows the unfolding of linguistic talent:

Hlalele monna hlooho ekgolo!

Habo-Tau haho-marena amangata,

Morena ke-Hlalele a-inotshi.

The nostalgic feeling of a child who chants 'Tebetebe' brinks on suicide, yet it is a mere game of children. The revelation of metric patterns in Motsukunyane(8.8.7.7) and of Makukkutwane (5.5.5.5./5.5.5.5.) show a deviation from the traditional praise poetry to the modern one. A 'Kgati' game cannot be played without observing the time rhythm.

0.3 Since S.Sotho was completely preliterate only about 140 years ago and since the Basotho remained a rural and essentially non-literate people up to about 1930, these strongly vocalised and verbalised games may still be found, though with the advent of an institutionalised mass education they are on the verge of disappearing altogether. The purpose of this study is to preserve them not for their own sake but as literature or rather the nucleus from which S.Sotho literature has also emanated. They are the remnants of our indefinite past which have been handed down from generation to generation by the children's mouths.

0.4 We contrast our children....of whom we demand alertness and accuracy, a full verbal control of a great mass of essential facts stored in memory,....with the white man's child....of whom he demands quietness, even silence, studiousness, and an ingestion of an enormous intellectual world with little opportunity to give out at an early age what is in him. There are those among the whites (like Prof.E.O.J.Westphal whom I know) who believe that the formalised, perhaps heavy parental control of African children is not a bad thing and that the result of this study could be as much to preserve - possibly to revive - the ancient Sotho 'class-room of life' in a new setting as to show at the same time how little is taught the white child of family and national tradition. A Mosotho child can trace its genealogy tree at least three generations back:

Re-Bataung baMatjhela,

BaNtheth'aMorapedi,

BaTebejane'aMatlatsa,....

0.5 It is true that skill is demanded in these games and that even though a star performer is acclaimed when he makes his appearance, the creation and appearance of such a star performer is not the purpose of these games and they do not have a strong element of competitiveness. They play in order to enjoy and entertain themselves. All shout with joy when every participant succeeds. For example, in any 'kgati' game the defaulter is given chance to watch those who have mastered the game, and thereafter join the game himself. Repetition must involve appropriate activity on the part of the player if it is to be effective.

0.6 Considering any of the memory games, these games do not bring out a youth with a phenomenal memory as a young man for whom a specialised job (such as e.g. a court praise-poet) is ensured. The games of the children are not watched over by 'talent scouts' who will then ensure that the most competent child will be given a job at a high salary. It must be stated here that no spectators are allowed (all are expected to take part) and that the 'nqalo' (playground) is far from the crowds. (Playing near the homestead is believed to cause an epidemic.) Adults are, therefore, mostly entirely unaware of who is good at a game. On the other hand among the children themselves, considered as a group, a memory will build up that such-and-such a person excels at 'morabaraba' (the Mill) and is sure to provide popular entertainment when the occasion arises. He is known as 'Ra-mawa-aitjang' (Father of playing styles that waste themselves) for lack of effective opponents. The importance of memory training in human society needs no emphasis. Hunter¹⁾ summarises it this way 'When a person approaches any memorizing task, he brings to it those long-term patterns of retaining which he has cumulatively built up through past experience..... And it is by modification to these patterns

¹⁾ Hunter, 1968, p.112.

that he succeeds in retaining the characteristics of this material(the games in our case) for use in the future.' This is one theory. But we might reverse it and say that any human being has the ability to store immense amounts of information in a way that is not accounted for by the environmental theories of the conditioned reflex type. The choice of a suitable vehicle for eliciting the latent operation of memory is perhaps the most outstanding feature of these games. A kind of rhythmic pulsation has much to do with memory.

0.7 The lack of competitiveness but appreciation of excellence cannot be stressed sufficiently as an element in child play..... though its absence may well be built up into a reconsidered classroom technique in African schools. In school work teachers know the advantage of introducing a topic in terms which are already familiar to embrace the unfamiliar. But having removed the concept of competitive excellence from the scheme of things in childhood life we may now turn to the effect of verbalised play on the society as a whole and we may turn especially to the creation and appreciation of an adequate linguistic performance in S. Sotho children. This we have tried to unfold in the following chapters.

0.8 It is true that the Basotho have no literary tradition in the true sense of the word, and no training in the use of literature in the libraries. A brief survey of such libraries as exist for their use shows that the children turn more to the newspapers, comics and current commentary than to history and great literature. Their training is essentially in fact and in keeping abreast of current developments though their memories are indoctrinated at an early age with information about their origins, their families, their customs, their totems and other matters such as information on sex matters, on animals of the veld and the like.

0.9 There are certain factors which may impede full exploitation of what the children have learnt in the games in the present day community. While it is generally accepted that 'childhood community' converts into 'adulthood community' these repressing impediments keep on nagging the childish mind. The recollection of these early experiences is repressed because they are intimately associated with the primitive, selfish, pleasure-seeking tendencies which were initially repressed because they met with punishment and parental dissatisfaction sometimes. Another factor, tendencies which are denied present expression because they would be so painfully inconsistent with our socially-derived notions of the sort of person we are and the way we should behave. Children were not slow to note this and drastic modifications are being effected to their traditional games today.

0.10 Games comprise the universal language of the children, all the children. This accounts for the points of similarity seen in these games among the nations of the world. Chatelain¹¹⁾ has a better answer to this : 'Comparing the African folk-lore with that of the other races, we find that many of the myths, favorite types of characters, and peculiar incidents, which have been called universal, because they recur among so many races, can also be traced through Africa from sea to sea. African folk-lore is not a tree by itself, but a branch of one universal tree.'

¹¹⁾ Chatelain, 1894, p.19.

CHAPTER ONE.

INTRODUCTION.

1.1 The arrival of the first French missionaries in Lesotho in 1833 heralded a new era in the life of the Basotho in general and their literature in particular. Prior to this period Southern Sotho was passed on from generation to generation by the so-called 'neano-ya-tabā'¹⁾ (word-of-mouth) and, as a result, much has been lost to posterity. These missionaries endeavoured to convert the oral language into a written form, but their primary aim was not to preserve the literature as such. It was to teach the masses how to read the Bible so that the message of the gospel could reach their hearts.

1.2 Lestrade²⁾ observes that 'Most Bantu literature of the old type has been handed down through purely oral channels over periods of time varying in length, but all stretching far enough back for such history to have become, in most cases, legendary'. The earlier 'legendary lore' of Sesotho was not recorded. It was only later that missionaries started to gain interest in Southern Sotho, even then, only as a medium of communication. Earlier works reflect that they were not able to draw the distinction between Southern Sotho and Tswana. This is important since oral legendary lore is local and certainly geographically confined.

1.3 Since then more importance has rightly been given to the study of technical linguistics. Unfortunately literary linguistics, lore and literature did not develop apace as the missiona-

¹⁾Ellenberger, 1928, p.III,

²⁾Schapera, 1950, p.297.

ries were not at first part of the culture. Later researches show that the two disciplines are equally important and interwoven, but the early missionary students of the language could not know much of the oral traditional literature that could only be gleaned from old men and women was being lost. Very often, when old people are approached, they become suspicious and surprised at the sudden change of attitude and the importance that is being attached to the things of long ago, the things they did or said when they were still young. Their loss of memory and lack of co-operation handicap the research worker, even the black African research worker. Whenever they find themselves unable to explain anything they prefer to make exaggerated statements rather than admit that they cannot recall or they do not know. In fairness to the early missionaries in Lesotho it should be stated here that the Basotho did not excell themselves in preserving their traditions; after all the art of writing was still unknown to them. On the other hand the missionaries could not do much to preserve these traditions because they were still not part of the Basotho culture at that stage. However, even so, the Lesotho missionaries did not lose much time. It could be reckoned that they lost roughly fifty years only. It was not and could not be known at that stage by both black and white that 'traditional oral lore' was to be viewed at a later stage as a compact body of knowledge of equal importance to the preserved written and true literature of European and Asian nations. Lesotho had no writing and it was the job of the missionaries to create it.

1.4 Today it is not possible to find 'pure' Southern Sotho even at the innermost inaccessible rural parts of Lesotho because of the impact of foreign infiltration and the process

of civilisation. Some aged informants are, most of the time not aware that they are using borrowed words because many such words have already become part and parcel of this language. But the literates and the students do not feel satisfied with such a situation because these aged informants are regarded as the custodians of the 'pure' language and are part of a century old linguistic history, something original and free from foreign taint and adulteration. This, however is an impossibility. All languages have loan words which, at times give more accurate meaning to what is being said than the typical native word. In this study such words have been found and they have been traced not only to the other Bantu languages but also to many foreign non-African languages.

1.5 'The Transformation of the Traditional Southern Sotho Oral Lore into Literature' is a very extensive topic. This study will therefore, be confined to only one aspect of it, namely, the traditional games of the Southern Sotho children as a definite branch of folk-lore. The thesis will be in the form of a linguistic as well as a literary survey of these games. In doing so, emphasis will be laid on certain facts concerning form, content, meaning, technique, etiquette, vocabulary and so on. There is no doubt that the breadth of this subject precludes the possibility of treating all these games completely in one study. An attempt has, however been made to gather a wide variety of these games in their traditional form. These games have been described with a brief discussion of their particular value from the linguistic and literary standpoints without excluding their cultural and social significance.

1.6 A considerable amount of literature concerning children's games has appeared in the other languages than Bantu, more

especially Southern Sotho. We have learnt that games have educational value, they promote health and muscular tone, they are recreative and so on; but very little has been said about their linguistic and literary value, about their cultural content, their semantics - all as means of obtaining insight into many of the customs and the beliefs of Basotho ancestors.

1.7 These games have hitherto not been studied in the same way as the customs, superstitions and folk-tales have been studied, namely, as a definite branch of the traditional folk-lore. This study intends to tread this virgin soil by showing that they form a branch by themselves and, as such, they contribute to the results which traditional folk-lore is daily producing towards elucidating many unrecorded facts in the early history and literature of the Basotho nation. Hitherto no attention has been paid to the manner or method in which a game is played. It is, in addition, to the method or form of play, when taken together with the words, that some attention should be drawn in the belief that this is most important to the history of the games. It must once more be pointed out that this study aims not only at the collection, the technique and the recording of the traditional games but also at the part they play in the development of traditional lore and its transformation into literature. The linguistic and the literary content of these games will be dealt with in detail.

1.8 These games can be used as anthropological evidence, not of the savage youthful life but of the cultural things and traits which brought happiness to the pre-civilisation Mosotho. An examination of many of these traditional games will prove for them a very remote origin, showing traces of early beliefs, customs, and practices which the children themselves could not

have invented, and would not have made the subject of their play unless those things were as familiar to them as trains, swings, marbles, dolls, etc are to the children of today. The language of these games is rich in its innocence though obscure, at times, even to the Mosotho of today.

1.9 These games also had a bearing on the social life of the Basotho. They served as pastimes and forms of recreation. Their characteristic features are revealing, inter alia, they appear in lines like poetry; some have rhyme and rhythm matched with action. There is a lavish use of ideophones, songs and dialogue. This study aims at a new and unfamiliar approach of the games. It will be shown hereunder that this literary wealth of traditional games has hitherto remained untapped. The obscurity of the vocabulary and the names of the instruments used make this an important, if not an interesting study. These are the cultural artefacts which have been preserved in the games of the children. All these should enrich the Southern Sotho language in particular and the other Bantu languages in general very appreciably. The physical and the educational value of the games will obviously be omitted in this study.

1.10 Finally, the other purpose of this study is to take a fresh look at the traditional lore; not as fossilised corpus of themes and conventions,³⁾ but as an organic whole of re-creating what has been received and is handed on, and as literature, a process endlessly multiform and continuous. In handling this material it will become clearer that folklore, anthropology, musicology, linguistics, etc are related disciplines. This study is expected to lead to a new comprehension of oral technique. A traditional game will not be delineated only as a habit of life but also as a specific genre. As already stated, this study will serve as an inquiry into the dynamics of poetic construction.

³⁾ Lord, 1965, preface (by H. Levin).

CHAPTER TWO.

BACKGROUND AND CLASSIFICATION.

2.1 Curtis⁴⁾ quotes G.S.Hall as saying that 'all games are remnants of the earlier activities of the race that have come down to us (the present generation) in somewhat modified form — universal activities that have been practised from unnumbered generations.' This assertion partly explains the nature of the games under review. They have obviously passed on with modifications and variations from one generation to the other and from one locality to the other. This also accounts for the points of similarity discerned in them and those of the other language groups. However, such foreign infiltrations have not made them lose their identity and complexion. In the circumstances, they can still be referred to as traditional. The terms 'game' and 'play' should not be confused here because they differ. Games are, in fact, highly organized forms of play.

2.2 These games survived and were transmitted because they must everywhere have served some great purpose. A survey of the Southern Sotho traditional games also reveals that 'the dramatic actions come down from the times when the action they dramatise was the contemporary action of the people'⁵⁾.

⁴⁾ Curtis, 1917, p. 6. (Hall, G.S., Adolescence, Appleton, London, 1911)

⁵⁾ Gomme, Vol. II, 1898, p. 473.

2.3 There are various kinds of games of which de Cort⁶⁾ notes the following: 'nabootsingspelen of ambachtspelen, zangspelen, dansspelen, gezelschapsspelen, tijdspelen, springspelen, loopspelen, kampspelen, bergspelen, spookjesspelen, draaispelen, kansspelen, spelen met speelgoed, enz'. This arrangement is not entirely bad, but it gives some direction of the possible line to follow. It may perhaps not apply in its entirety to the Southern Sotho traditional games and it may not satisfactorily serve as a linguistic or literary classification, but it does give a purposive classification that may not be irrelevant to our purpose.

2.4 Classification offers one of the biggest problems of any study of games because no one game belongs to one watertight class. De Cort (in the above paragraph) suggests an overt descriptive classification. Gomme⁷⁾ asserts that 'all games seem primarily to fall into one or two sections: the first, dramatic games; the second, games of skill and chance'. She further suggests that the games be classified under the customs contained in them, the implements of play and also as skill and chance games. Such a scheme is more inclined towards anthropology than the language. 'The first necessary classification will relate to the incidents which show the customs and rites from which the games have descended; the second classification will relate to the dramatic force of the games', she concludes.

⁶⁾ de Cort, 1929, p.8.

⁷⁾ Gomme, op. cit., p.461.

2.5 Staley⁸⁾ gives eleven principal methods of classification, namely, according to:

- (1) material used,
- (2) sex,
- (3) age,
- (4) formation,
- (5) place,
- (6) type,
- (7) functional activity,
- (8) sense training,
- (9) school grading,
- (10) psychic effect, and
- (11) athletic significance.

Some of these divisions are vague as they stand, for example, place refers to the location where the game is played, and type refers to whether the game is played by an individual or a team, whether it is continuous or not, whether there is elimination or not, etc. This is, however, the most comprehensive classification and it will be considered when these games are described.

2.6 It must still be contended that a classification of games cannot be wholly satisfactory. As the games have physical, educational and social values, it seems logical that their classification conforms to these values basically. But this is irrelevant where a linguistic and a literary analyses are concerned. Games meant for boys may be played by girls. This is usually frowned upon in the Basotho community. Yet men's games are very often and commonly played by the boys.

⁸⁾ Staley, 1924, p. 6.

2.7 The games under review are children's. Now the problem of age grouping arises. In the same way as sex fails in most of the games as a means of classification, age also fails. 'It is usual roughly to classify play interests in accordance with four periods of school life (namely, 1 - 7, 7 - 9, 9 - 11 and 11 upwards), but the line dividing any period from the next period above or below is in no way defined, although the difference between the play interest, for instance, of a child of four and one of fourteen, is clear cut'⁹⁾. But the children learn by imitation. It is significant at this stage to point out that the two main methods whereby games have been passed on in history of the world are, first, the older children taught the younger ones; and second, the adults (usually the mothers) taught them. In a Basotho society a child was not necessarily excluded from a game because of its sex. Sex considerations were, if necessary, made at a later stage of their growth. Age-groupings were arbitrary and they overlap most of the time.

2.8 Whenever a game is played spectators come together and they seldom ponder over the effect of their presence at such undertakings. In Basotho children's games the presence of spectators and strangers seems to cast a damper on the participants. As a result, all must take part. Elsom¹⁰⁾ rightly observes that 'the best form of game is that in which every participant has an active part to play, whether he be old or young,..... so that there will be no spectators, but all will be active participants'.

⁹⁾ Davies, 1951, p.19.

¹⁰⁾ Elsom, 1929, p.10.

2.9 If Basotho children do not expect or enjoy being watched while playing, how do they solve the problem of the spectators? The participants are the spectators themselves. In addition, they have a 'nqalo'(playground) far from the crowds, the 'madding crowds', where they enjoy their games unperturbed. These games seem to be played for enjoyment. Defeating the opponent is not the primary aim. To them a game is just a pleasurable activity which implies a change from what usually occupies one's time. A game promotes a friendly feeling, and is, therefore, considered as a friendly rivalry.

2.10 From the foregoing discussion it is clear that games may be classified in various ways depending on the purpose of such a classification. For the purpose of the present study the following classification has been found necessary and feasible although admittedly arbitrary and conventional in many respects. The terms used for the different classes have been ascribed with specific meaning and connotation as will be understood later. The overlappings could not be helped in an interwoven linguistic and literary survey. Research work has also revealed that among the Basotho there are Animal Imitation Games, Guessing Games, Contest Games, Dance Games and, of course, the Games of Skill and Chance. In an attempt to accommodate all these, this classification will be followed in this study:

- I. Memory Games,
- II. Skill Games,
- III. Totemic Games,
- IV. Dramatic Games,
- V. Domestic Games,
- VI. Chance Games,
- VII. Cultural Games,
- VIII. Natural Phenomena Games, and
- IX. Animal Imitation Games.

2.11 Before discussing the abovementioned classes of games, it now be appropriate to refer to the existing publications in this field. There are none of importance. The few that are mentioned hereunder could only be used for mere reference. Those that are worth mentioning are:

(a) Sekese¹¹⁾ has written about the customs and the proverbs of the Basotho. He has recorded the names of a few of these games, e.g. lesokwana (par. 36, p. 26), bana lekgwedi (par. 73, p. 51), bana lemaru (par. 74, p. 51) and seotsanyana (par. 76, p. 51) and, in some cases, he has given a fragmentary description of the occasion when they were played. He has done better than anybody else.

(b) Segoete¹²⁾ also mentions the names of four of these games in the last chapter of his book, but he offers no description at all.

¹¹⁾ Sekese, Morija, 1907.

¹²⁾ Segoete, Morija, 1913.

(c) Tladi, S.S.¹³⁾ writes about the days of yore and, incidentally finds himself having to mention the names of a few traditional games. In his elementary reference Tladi does not commit himself to any descriptions.

(d) Mabille and Dieterlen¹⁴⁾ mention the names of these games without making any attempt to delineate them. Their dictionary was, however, very helpful as a basis for research work done in this study.

All the other well-known Southern Sotho authors like Mofolo, Khaketla, Ntsane, Moiloa, Motsieloa, etc merely mention the names of these games without giving any explanation whatsoever. The indispensability of a study of this nature cannot be more strongly emphasized. In the absence of any noteworthy books on this subject this study depended on intensive research. Most of the words used in these games have fallen into disuse and they do not appear in the existing dictionaries.

¹³⁾ Tladi, 1951, Morija.

¹⁴⁾ Mabille & Dieterlen, 1961, Morija.

CHAPTER THREE.

MEMORY GAMES.

(1) Malatadiana.

3.1 The origin of this name is obscure. It is a game of riddles played with stones or any inanimate objects. It means a riddle or a puzzle. There are two versions of this riddle, namely, 'malatadiana-tsela' and 'malatadiana-thole'. It can, however, be analysed as 'ma-lata-di-hana' (one who fetches those that refuse), that is to say, 'one who solves the puzzles'. The prefix ma- is commonly used in S. Sotho in class 1(a) to refer to those who 'overdo an act', -lata' (to) fetch', di- a prefix of noun class 8 or 10 and '-hana' (to) refuse'. In '-hana' the 'silent -h-' has been dropped; otherwise this '-diana' part should have been '-tsana' according to the established phonetic rules of this language.

3.2 In this game of riddles two participants are involved at a time while all others are 'spectators' awaiting their turn. It has already been intimated that among the Basotho children there are no spectators in the true sense of the word. They are like contestants standing at the starting point of the race track awaiting their turn. Supposing ten stones are put down in a row. The first one at the top is called either Malatadiana-tsela (Mr Fetch-those-that refuse-the-road) or Malatadiana-thole (Mr Fetch-those-that-refuse-the-heifer) as the case may be. The second one is called his eldest brother. And the remaining eight are the cooking pots. Next to every pot another stone is put in such a way that these eight stones form a line parallel to the first one. These are called the maize grains.

3.3 The following sketch shows the formation at the start of the game:

Malatadiana	(A)	
Eldest brother	(B)	
Cooking pot	(C)	(1) Maize grain
	(D)	(2)
	(E)	(3)
	(F)	(4)
	(G)	(5)
	(H)	(6)
	(I)	(7)
	(J)	(8)

3.4 The one who is being tested is not allowed to look at all the stones once the game has started because he has to guess their exact position. The questioner points at (A) and asks 'Who is this one?'. Answer: Malatadiana-tsela. He points at (B) and puts the same question. Answer: 'His father's eldest child'. He now points at (C), that is, the first pot. Here the answer is: 'Take out all its contents'. Then the questioner removes the 'grain' and this 'pot' is now empty. This means that the candidate has won the first round of this puzzle. The questioner takes him to the beginning again. As the questioner points the candidate now identifies Malatadiana, his father's eldest child and the empty 'pot' first. When he comes to the D-2 pot-grain pair, the candidate again shouts 'Take out all its contents'. He has now won the second round of his test. This procedure is repeated as many times as there are grains, and until all the 'pots' have had their contents emptied. The memory of the candidate must be so good as to enable him to remember the position of all these stones, he must remember the position of Malatadiana, his eldest brother, all the empty and unemptied pots. In the above sketch there are eight 'grains'. This means that this blind identification must be repeated eight times. The game, therefore ends when the J - 8 pair has been identified. The repeated question 'Who is this one?' and the answer 'The small pot has no grain' become so rhythmical that both the 'questioner' and his 'candidate' literally 'sing' them. The candidate's sigh of relief is clearly and fittingly interpreted by the use of the ideophone 'qiti' (as shown here-under). Very often the 'candidate' now becomes the 'examiner', and this can continue until the time to go to bed.

3.5 Here follows the verbal representation of this game:

A= questioner, and B = respondent.

- (i) A. Yeo ke-mang? (Who is this one?)
B. Malatadiana-tsela (Malatadiana-tsela)
A. Yeo ke-mang? (Who is this one?)
B. Ngwan'a rae emoholo. (His father's eldest child)
A. Yeo ke-mang? (Who is this one?)
B. Tlhatlolla, ore qiti! (Remove the pot from the fire with a thudding noise).

- (ii) A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Malatadiana-tsela
A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Ngwan'a rae emoholo
A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Pitsana haena kgobe (The little pot has no grain)
A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Tlhatlolla, ore qiti.

- (iii) A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Malatadiana-tsela
A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Ngwan'a rae emoholo
A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Pitsana haena kgobe
A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Le-enngwe haena kgobe (And another one has no grain)
A. Yeo ke-mang?
B. Tlhatlolla, ore qiti.

3.6 The question 'Yeo ke-mang?' is made up of the demonstrative, the copular formative and the interrogative. The significance of this word order hinges on the fact that the pointing at the object must come first before the question proper. This emphasizes the assertion that this is an identification game. It could have well been written down as 'Ke-mang yeo?' (It is who this one?). The antecedent (a mo-class noun) has been omitted. In form this 'yéò', first position demonstrative, resembles the second position demonstrative 'yéó' (that one), but they differ in tone. The tone of the former is HL (high-low) while that of the latter is HH (high-high). It has to be noted that there is an alternative form to the latter, namely, 'yeno' (that one).

3.7 'Mang' is a noun of sub-class 1a which takes bo- instead of ba- in the plural. However, these bo- nouns still employ the SC (subjectival concord) ba- of class 1. As an interrogative it is well placed at the end of the question because in S. Sotho the answer substitutes the interrogative word. The full answer to this question should have been 'Yeo ke-Malatadiana-tsela', but the demonstrative is redundant. The copular formative Ke- is an SC and it is invariably used with all the IIIPers. (third person) nouns. Its negative form 'hase' (it is not) is also used invariably.

3.8 It has already been stated what the possible source of the compound noun 'Malatadiana' could be. But it can only be assumed that the OC (objectival concord) -di- represents the

noun 'gintho'(things) which could be difficult to come by. From pronunciation it is obvious that 'Malatadiana-tsela' is an abbreviation of the possessive construction 'Malatadiana atsela'(the riddle of the road or the journey). Travellers could have well spent their resting time by playing such a game. On the other hand 'malatadiana-thole' is the shortened form of 'malatadiana asethole'(the female riddle game). It is a common thing for Basotho men to call their young, full-grown and beautiful wives 'dithole' and to omit the prefix of class 7 se- even in IS(monosyllabic) nominal stems, for example, 'ra sahao' for 'sera sahao'(your enemy).

3.9 In the sentence 'Ngwan'arae emoholo' the noun 'ngwana' is the velarized form of 'moana'. As usual the PC wa- has been shortened. The word 'rae' is a compound noun comprising the masculine prefix 'ra'(father) and -e from the absolute pronoun 'yena'(he/she). It is a common occurrence in the Bantu languages to drop the -na ending of these pronouns when they are used as possessives.(Cp Xhosa yam from yamna, Zulu yami from yamina and Sotho yame). But in 'rae' S.Sotho shows its peculiar behaviour, namely, to drop 'y-' when it is juxtaposed to '-e'.(Cp boya + ela = boela for boyela). In Tswana both 'rra' and 'rragwe' are used for 'father' and 'his/her father' respectively. Research has revealed that this 'rae' has fallen into disuse excepting in a few swear words like 'rae seeta'(his/her father's shoe) to avoid the actual expression 'rae sebono'(his/her father's anus). In some parts of Lesotho they say 'rae sebeta'(his/her father's liver) which is nearer to the actual swear word than 'rae seeta'. It is a common Basotho practice to refer to parts (especially the private parts) of the human body when they swear.

3.10 'Tlhatlolla' is another word which is fast disappearing even amongst the cooks. It is the reversive form of 'tlhatleha' (to place a pot on the fire). Contrary to the general belief that 'The neuter form (-cha) in Sotho indicates an intransitive state or condition without any special reference to an agent determining that condition¹⁵⁾', the verbs -tlhatleha, -aneha (expose to sunlight), -maneha (stick on to something), -fanyeha (hang), etc are transitive and refer to the 'act of placing on to something', for example, 'Kefanyeha noha sefateng' (I hang the snake on to the tree).

3.11 The ideophone 'qiti' (or gethe in some areas) refers to 'falling with a thud'. S. Sotho is one of the richest languages as far as ideophones are concerned; it makes a very serious attempt to interpret the 'sound' produced by verbal action. The verbal stem -re(say) usually precedes the ideophone. What is interesting in the sentence is the use SC o- which refers to a human being as the doer of the action instead of the pot he/she put down. The semantic significance here is that while the pot lands with a thud on the ground the 'respondent' also lands on the correct solution of the riddle.

3.12 'Pitsana haena kgobe' is not only a negative construction but also has a cultural significance. It refers to both the eating and the cooking habits of the Basotho. 'Dikgobe' (cooked grains) are not a major dish and the main cooking pot (pitsa) was seldom used for cooking them. As they were less perishable, they were often taken as food for the journey (Afrik. padkos).

¹⁵⁾ Doke & Mofokeng, 1957, p.154.

The following idiomatic expressions clearly show the attitude of the Basotho towards 'dikgobe':

(i) Hopheha kgobe (to cook the grain, i.e. to look fixedly at someone). One who cooks them must watch the pot so that it may not dry up and the grains get burnt.

(ii) Kgobe dibutswitse (the grains are well-cooked, i.e. one who had been crying has stopped doing so). The analogy here is that in the same as the grains cook in the water the eyes 'cook' in the tears when one cries.

(iii) Hohlabā kgobe ka-lemāo (to prick the grain with a needle, i.e. to lead an easy life). One has enough time to prick one grain at a time when one eats. This should disillusion anybody who thought the Basotho never used the 'fork' before.

3.13 There is repetition and music in these lines. The monotony of repeating the same question over and over again is broken by the various answers given and the difference in tone. This question - answer or dialogue style is very effective in its brevity. The 'falling tone' is used whenever the final sentence is pronounced. The 'personating' of these inanimate objects (stones) must also be noted. Above all, this is an important memory training game in its result but it is based on the fact that the Basotho in general regard it as important to remember details and so be able to report them accurately and without hesitation when questioned. It is understandable that in a culture without written records to assist memory that this must be so. In modern literature our authors have failed to couple this fact with what they have learnt as a requirement in literature, viz. a vivid imagination, but which they also can boost as a natural gift to Basotho children. The lively imagination that names each 'kgobe' and its exact position is no less a feature of the game as the ability to recall the named 'dikgobe'. In the final chapter to this thesis further emphasis will be laid on the importance of memory games and their invaluable importance in the process of education. It is in games like this that Basotho children in particular receive their early training in memory work.

(2) Mmangakane.

3.14 The literal meaning of the above name is 'Mother of the Little Doctor'. Its true meaning is 'Ngakane's wife'. This is a memory test game which is very often recited in the evening, when the children are seated round the fire before they retire to bed. Individuals take turns to recite. There is no form of punishment for the one who fails to go through the whole game. Instead, one is given ^a chance to prepare for another attempt. Their way of reciting is not the same although these lines are similar. Individuals adopt certain gestures as expressions of feeling or rhetorical device. One may move one's head from side to side while reciting or add a musical tone to this otherwise spoken arrangement — all these ^{are} calculated to make an impression on the listeners. Some may recite fast to show that they are not doubtful about the sequence of the lines.

3.15 Mmangakane.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Mmangakane, | (Ngakane's wife) |
| 2 Mphe ditlhoka. | (Give me the chaff) |
| 3 Tlhokase-tsaka, | (The chaff isn't mine) |
| 4 Ke-tsaNgakane. | (It is Ngakane's) |
| 5 Oile kae? | (Where has he gone?) |
| 6 Oile tsholong, | (He has gone to hunt) |
| 7 Wilobolaya (Oilobolaya) | (He has gone to kill) |
| 8 Mafukuthwane. | (The spotted hyenas) |
| 9 Ale-makae? | (How many of them?) |
| 10 Ale-mabedi. | (Two of them) |
| 11 Leleng lare: | (One of them said) |
| 12 Molapo, tsoha! | (Molapo, arise!) |
| 13 Ketshe jwang, | (How can I arise) |
| 14 Kebolailwe | (Having been killed) |

15 Ke-badisana	(By the herdboys)
16 Baha-Sethithi?	(Of Sethithi's village?)
17 Sethithi-boya,	(The hairy brown caterpillar)
18 Nka lehare,	(Take a razor blade)
19 Onyanyabetse	(Cut deep into)
20 Sapo latshwene	(The bone of the baboon)
21 Lelatshwenyane.	(And of its young one.)

3.16 It is evident that this is a dialogue, probably between two women because they are discussing food. As this dialogue has never been reduced to a written form, like most of the games in this study, the punctuation marks used here are in accordance with my own interpretation. 'Mmangakane' is a compound noun comprising the feminine prefix *mma* (from *mme wa*: mother of), the nominal stem *-ngak-* (doctor) and the diminutive suffix *-ane*. An insignificant doctor or a quack is called 'ngakana', but in a proper personal name the final *-a* is replaced by *-e*, as a term of reference. (Cp *mmangwane* (aunt) and not *mmangwana*). But, as already mentioned above, the true meaning of this name is 'Ngakane's wife' or 'Mrs Ngakane'. It is customary in S. Sotho to call someone's wife '*mma-*'.

3.17 The sentence 'Mphe' is derived from the IP (first person) OC, the alveolar nasal *n-* (me) and the verb stem *-fa* (give). This nasal 'hardens' the initial consonant of the verb, namely, the denti-labial *-f-* becomes an aspirated bilabial explosive *-ph-*. Once the lips are involved in the formation of a consonant, the bilabial equivalent of *n-*, namely, *m-* takes its place, hence *mphe* (give me). In the imperative the final *-a* of the verb stem is replaced by *-e* when an OC is used.

3.18 In the nasal classes 8, 9 and 10 it is not unusual for the initial hl- to be replaced by tlh- as in 'tlhoka' (a grain remaining in the husk after threshing or chaff). With all the nouns the negative formative of the copulative is invariably hase-(it is/they are not). The possessive -ka (mine) is an alternative of the obsolete -me. The full form of the locative interrogative -kae?(where?) in line 5 is 'hokae?'. This prefix 'ho-' distinguishes the locatives.

3.19 'Wilo' has never been recorded in S.Sotho. Its full form is 'O ile ho-' (He has gone to). This was heard from an informant in the Leribe area of Lesotho and needs special attention. At Qwaqwa(Witsieshoek) 'ulo' was used and in the eastern part of the Free State 'oilo' was current. This telescoping of words is allowed in S.Sotho and in the other languages, but our consideration here is how far can it be done without obliterating the identity of the words involved. An S.Sotho vowel o does become a semi-vowel w, for example, utlwa (hear) from 'utloa'. But 'wilo' has gone further than expected. If o can become a w and 'ile ho' can be shortened to 'ilo', then there is nothing wrong with 'wilo' (derived from oilo). Compare with 'utlwile' (heard) from 'utloile'. The 'ulo' of Qwaqwa is inexplicable excepting that in the old orthography the SC o of the IIP was written down as u. But the o under discussion is that of the IIIP which has always been written down as such.

3.20 Spotted hyenas are not 'mafukuthwane', a black herb botanically identified as 'Solanum nigrum' or simply 'black

nightshade' but 'mafiritshwane'. The singular form of 'mefukuthwane' is 'mofukuthwane'. As no such word has ever been recorded as a synonym of 'mafiritshwane', Basotho children have enriched their language by another word. But the reason had to be sought. The answer lies in the earlier remark that Basotho children can coin their own word in order to avoid a word which refers to anything they fear or a word they are, by the rules of the society, not allowed to use in their daily speech. The game was played in the evening before bedtime and to mention 'mafiritshwane' would cause them a terrible nightmare. Further, this type of improvising has led to a new language used by the newly-wed girls, namely, the Hlonepha Language (Respect Language). The improvised word must have formal and tonal features which must come as close as possible to those of the original word. It can, therefore, be concluded from this and their other words that the Basotho children were in their pre-literate state gifted in managing these linguistic manipulations.

3.21 Normally the meaning of -kae? in line 9 is unpredictable. It may mean 'how many?', 'how big?' or 'how much?'. So 'mafukuthwane ale-makae?' may mean both 'how many/big?'. The answer, however, 'Ale-mabedi' gives the clue that 'How many?' is intended. The -le- used in lines 9 and 10 is the true S. Sotho copula. Further semantic complications arise when the numeral stem '-nngwe' (one) is used. It is usually used as -ng with all the nouns excepting those of class 9 where this full form is used. 'Leleng' may, without prior reference to something, mean

'a certain one', 'another one', 'the other', 'the same',
'a different one', 'one', etc.

3.22 When a permissive question is asked the verb must end in -e instead of the usual -a, hence 'Ketsahe jwang?' The Subjunctive is further used after the imperatives, generally to express consequential action, for example, 'Nka lehare (hore) onyanyabetse'. It is permissible to omit the conjunctive 'hore' (so that) between these two clauses. The number of words in a command have to be pruned to a minimum.

3.23 The possessive construction 'Baha-Sethithi' raises an important semantic issue: baSethithi means 'those of Sethithi' baha-Sethithi means 'those of Sethithi's village or home'. The locative prefix or formative Ha-(the place or home of) precedes a proper personal name, and this 'ha-' compares favourably with 'haae' (home). 'Keya ho-Sethithi' means 'I am going to Sethithi (personally)' while 'Keya ha-Sethithi' means 'I am going to Sethithi's home'. It is a peculiarity of these S.Sotho locative formatives to refer to the difference in size of places.

3.24 It is more often than not difficult to distinguish verse from prose in S.Sotho. But in this game we were given guidance by the pauses, the falling end-tone and the metric length of each line. In traditional S.Sotho verse and drama the artificial, mechanical devices like these are considered irrelevant and unimportant. But contrary to this general belief, this game has been found to conform to these requirements although it is undoubtedly traditional. The length of all these lines is five syllables. To ensure this,

miscellaneous poetic devices were used, for example, the nouns were used without their prefixes: (di-)tlhoka, (le-)tsholong and (le-)sapo; the locative prefix ho- was dropped before the interrogative -kae?, the invariable negative formative of the copula 'hase' lost its 'h-'; and the construction 'oileho-' was abbreviated into 'wilo'.

3.25 Most of these traditional dialogues are in the form of question and answer. In these lines some of the obvious questions have been omitted, e.g. between lines 3 - 4 (Ke-tsamang?: Whose is it?), 6 - 7 (Oile hoetsang?: What has he gone for?), etc. The questions precede their answers in such a reasonable succession that they serve as reminders in such a memory game. That the answers are predictable is not a weakness but a proof of the logical development and arrangement of this dialogue. The flow is, consequently not interrupted when the lines are recited. The brevity of these lines makes them effective. In fact there are many one-word lines. The copulative forms are also terse.

3.26 There are other poetic features which are noteworthy. The word 'tlhoka' links lines 2 - 3, and 'Sethithi' lines 16 - 17. Parallelism is clear at the beginning of lines 5 - 6, 9 - 10, and the 'ke' of lines 13, 14 and 15. Chiasmus (cross-parallelism) is seen in lines 12 - 13 in the words 'tsoha' and 'tsohe'. The vocatives 'Mmangakane' and 'Molapo, tsoha' are so effective that Molapo is supposed to have replied in his death 'Ketshe jwang'. The onomatopoeic pun of the names 'Sethithi' and 'sethithi-boya' cannot be overlooked.

3.27 It is contrary to the rules of etiquette for a beggar to say 'Mphe' without preceding it with the polite 'ako-' (may you please). Here it is done for the sake of brevity. These were the times of famine when the people ate 'ditlhoka', 'mafiritshwane' and 'tshwene'. To add 'tshwenyane' to 'tshwene' is to emphasize that even the smaller carnivores were eaten. Under normal circumstances the Basotho do not partake of any flesh eating animals. To go out on a hunting expedition was a common practice among the men in those days when the country-side teemed with wild beasts. It was unmanly for a healthy man to remain at home on such occasions. It is in a game like this that the children are taught their ancestral history, e.g. about Molapo, the son of Moshweshwe the founder of the Basotho nation. The belief in ancestor worship is accentuated in this game where the starving people enlist the sympathy of their dead. The fact that Molapo can answer when he is known to be dead is a further proof in the belief that there is an ancestral, spirit world where the 'dead' continue to live. The name Sethithi is fictitious, it refers to the person who hates. It is believed that if the caterpillar 'sethithi-boya' touches one's skin it causes a rash to break out. Similar qualities could be possessed by one's enemies. He is called upon to cut very deep (nyanyabetsa) into the flesh of these animals to ensure their death.

3.28 The content of this game can safely be divided into three parts or stanzas. In lines 1 - 4 someone asks for food from Ngakane's wife. She cannot give anything in the absence of her husband. It is unusual for a Mosotho man to have a say in the dishing out of food but it seems in an emergency he could. Lines 5 - 16 refer to the steps that were taken to

obtain food. The question which arises here is how Ngakane's wife could tell how many hyenas her husband could kill while she remained at home. It is common belief that hyenas hunted in pairs, hence the answer 'two'. Lines 17 - 21 are a sort of retaliation for the death of Molapo at the hands of his enemies. These lines also summarise the fact that during a famine they ate anything including the monkeys which almost resemble the human beings. The granting of powers of speech to animals is liked very much by the children and they enjoy such games.

3.29 There are a few proverbs and idioms related to the words which appear in this game:

Mphemphe ealapisa, motho okgonwa ke-sahae (Begging causes hunger, it suffices to have one's own food/thing).

Tshwene haeipone lekopo (A monkey doesn't see its protruding forehead i.e. one seldom sees one's own shortcomings).

Tshwenyane haekwenye sehwele (A baby monkey doesn't swallow the wild bulb i.e. an unimportant person is at a disadvantage in the presence of his superiors)

Tshwenyane haekgotshe ekgohlopjwe (When a baby monkey is full, it must be shaken i.e. to avoid the unpleasant escape of the food through the nostrils when the baby belches after meals).

Tsholo lamafifi (A darkness party i.e. witchcraft) Witches are supposed to run about naked at midnight.

(3) Mokadiathole.

3.30 This name means 'a young woman's string of beads'. When this game is played there are two persons who are actively involved, namely, the initiator and the respondent. The other children are spectators or admirers who are waiting for their turn. The initiator poses the same question while the respondent gives different answers. The game goes on until the latter exhausts the answers he has in mind. He indicates the end by shouting an interjective:

A = the initiator(questioner), B = respondent.

A. O-mang? (Who are you?)

B. Ke-mokadiathole (I am 'the woman's bead-lace')

A. O-mang?

B. Kefihletse ditshwene (I found the monkeys)

A. O-mang?

B. Dija morolwane (Eating wild seeds)

A. O-mang?

B. Yare kere dimphe (When I asked them to give me)

A. O-mang?

B. Tsamphupela thamo (They stuffed all into their mouths)

A. O-mang?

B. Thangwana, ngwanake (A little mouthful, my child)

A. O-mang?

B. Tloo, keopepe (Come, let me pick-a-back you)

A. O-mang?

B. Reye ha-Shokgwe (Let's go to Shokgwe's home)

A. O-mang?

B. Ha-Shokgwe haho-motho (At Shokgwe's there's nobody)

A. O-mang?

B. Tshibana dipedi (There are two small feathers only)

A. O-mang?

B. Tsamonyokola-tsela (Of the road-digger)

A. O-mang?

B. Thiya!sekoloko,thiya! (Sneeze,non-stop,sneeze!)

3.31 The interrogative 'mang', unlike its English equivalent, is a noun with a plural form bomang(Who and who?). This prefix bo- is peculiar in that it is normally used with the proper names to mean one thing or person of that name and those with it/him. As a result it belongs to a sub-class 1(a). This question is repeated throughout the game until it loses its interrogative effect and becomes a mere nominy. (A nominy is a defiance uttered by one side in a game and is answered by the other before the actual contest begins.) This dialogue is not sung but spoken. 'O-mang?' is a question only at the beginning. The meaning of -fihletse(the perfect form of the applied form fihlela)is twofold, namely, 'to arrive at' and 'to be within the reach'. It is this latter meaning that is often lost sight of. In some areas the verb -fumane(found) was used.

3.32 The juxtaposed vowels i + a should receive some attention. The vowel -a is invariably used when PC's and the Narrative tense are formed. In the first instance we have 'ditshwene tsa-' (the monkeys of) instead of 'ditshwene dia; and in the narrative it is still 'ditshwene tsa-...' (the monkeys did...). If $l + i = di$, then one of the characteristic features of S.Socho is the interchangeability of the consonants l, d and ts. Attention must also be focussed on 'mokadiathole' where the -dia- part has not become -tsa-. Two conclusions can now be drawn. First, in the nasal classes(plural)i.e. 8 and 10 -dia- can become -tsa- as a PC or a narrative tense formative. Second, when a

possessive construction(e.g. mokadi wathole)is shortened, the '-di'a-' does not change, hence 'mokadiathole'. This semi-vowel elision has not been referred to by the well-known grammarians, probably because the semi-vowels w and y are derived from the vowels o/u and e respectively. When elisions or omissions are made in a possessive construction they never affect the invariable possessive vowel -a. It has also become irreducible and identifying part of all PC's.

3.33 The verb -fihletse as the perfect form of -fihlela is a further example of the assertion in the above paragraph that l, d and ts are interchangeable. The meaning of the applied extension -ela cannot be predicted with certainty. Basically it has two interpretations, namely, 'to do for or on behalf of' and 'to do towards or with regard to'. For this reason the verb '-fumane'(found) was used in some areas. 'Kefihletse ditshwene' can mean both 'I found the monkeys' or 'I reached out the monkeys', but in this context the former applies. 'Morolwane' is the diminutive of 'morolo' (parviflorus).

3.34 'Yare' is the abbreviated form of the narrative 'eile-yare' (it happened that). It is usually followed by 'ha'(when) which has been omitted here for the sake of shorter lines. The present tense form of this deficient verb is 'ere' with the indefinite concord e-. In such conjunctives the stem '-re'(say) loses its basic meaning. It must, however, not be confused with the e- that is usually prefixed to verbs in the imperative constructions.

3.35 The difference in tone between '-thāmò' (mouthful) 'thāmò' (neck) leaves no doubt about their semantic values. The full form of the former is 'mothamo'. It is highly unusual in S.Sotho to drop the prefix mo- of the noun. This is done only with the prefixes le-, se-, bo- and di-. With the noun in a possessive construction this is allowed for the same noun classes. The reason lies in the formal similarity of both the prefix and the SC of these nouns. There are only two exceptions to this rule, namely, ho- and ba- nouns. In these lines this was done to bring about a new type of running linking seen in 'thamo, Thangwana, ngwanake' - this is sort of play on words or pun. From the way it has been used, 'Thangwana' could well be the name of the child who was carried on the back.

3.36 The sequence of the two objects following the applied -ela is very important. In 'Ditshwene tsafupela/nna mothamo' this absolute pronoun nna(me) is the indirect object while mothamo(mouthful) is the direct one. That word order must be adhered to strictly or the meaning is altered or lost.

3.37 The process of velarisation is demonstrated in the formation of the diminutive 'Thangwana' from 'thamo' and 'ngwanake' from a star-form 'moanake'. As a form of address 'ngwanaka' ends in -e.

3.38 'Tloo, keopepe' is an interesting form of command. The monosyllabic verb -tla(come) becomes -tloo in the imperative. At Roma in Lesotho my informant argued that the forms etlo and etlong can be used. These have always been taken to be corruptions of tloo and tloong respectively. But from their form and use they obey the rules of grammar. The conjunctive

hore(so that) which introduces the subjunctive clauses has been omitted, but its effect is shown on the final -e's of both verbs -pepe and -ye. Ofcourse a verb can still end in -e if the OC is used as in 'keopepe'.

3.39 The negative construction 'haho-motho' is non-concording and copular. Its positive 'ho-motho' (there is a person) also uses the indefinite 'ho'. Many nouns with the le- prefix have double forms in the plural, e.g. lesiba: ditshiba/masiba. The difference in meaning between these forms is slight but not negligible: ditshiba(feathers still attached to the body of the bird) and masiba(feathers already plucked off). This gives a clue to what 'monyokola-tsela' refers to. This 'road-digger' may well be the fowl. In which case it may be concluded that at Shokgwe's there were no people but the fowls only. The fowl could scratch the road but to call it the 'road-digger' as if it were a 'bull-dozer' is an exaggeration. As a fowl has more than two feathers, it can also be assumed that plumage, like poultry, is given a collective connotation here.

3.40 Interjectives are not easy to translate in the Bantu languages. Their meaning is so interwoven with the situation when they are used that it is almost impossible to attempt to give it without considering such a situation. Literally thiya refers to 'sneezing', but here there is nothing to cause that. So this interjective has been used, like in the other games, to round off this game, or to express disappointment at the absence of the Shokgwe's; after all 'leshokgwa' is 'bitterwortel'. He undertakes slandering campaigns against the members of his community, and this leaves a bitter taste in their mouths.

3.41 The compound noun 'mo-nyokola-tsela' reveals another peculiarity of S. Sotho. Normally an agentive noun is formed from a verbal stem by suffixing -i: monyokodi(digger, uprooter).

But, in a compound noun where some other part of speech is joined to complete it, this -i is never used, that is, the verb retains its final -a.

3.42 The content of this game is held together by its logical development and the message it carries. The initiator A asks B to identify herself. She calls herself 'the young girl's lace of beads'. She found the monkeys feeding on the seeds (bulbous plants). When she asks for some they quickly throw all of them into their mouths until their cheeks bulge. In despair she leaves for the nearest village with her child. But here at Shokgwe's village they find nobody excepting the fowls. They retrace their steps back home.

3.43 It was not customary for womenfolk to wear this kind of lace. Young men left a tuft of hair (lengetse) on their heads and from it this lace was attached so that it hung down their foreheads when they went out on their love-making escapades. One was considered a dandy when one wore this 'mokadi'. In the children's games the animals are endowed with human traits, and this amused them greatly. Monkeys are known to be very fond of seeds and bulbs. As carrying the child on the back was done by females, this makes it easy to know that this game refers to a woman. Begging for food is not a shameful deed in the Basotho society. Those who give today will be given tomorrow.

3.45 The goal of the game is not so much to outdo any of the two participants but to see how far the respondent could relate a story punctuated by this invariable question 'O-mang?'. This question serves as a means of giving the respondent time to think of the next line which must come up logically.

3.46 There are a few sayings that are derived from this game:
(i)Kgabane hadirwesane mokadi - Dandies don't help one another to wear the bead-lace. They are rivals and everyone of them aims at winning the love of the 'dikgarebe'(maidens).

(ii)Mokadi wamotetengwane - the hanging 'thing' of the ostrich. The commonly used term for an ostrich is 'mpjhe' and not 'motetengwane'.

(iii)Morolwane waditshwene - the wild plant identified botanically as 'parviflorus' is liked very much by the baboons. There is also 'morolwane waditshwene omoholo', a bigger type of this wild bulb.

(iv)Shokgwe - an inquisitive type of person who speaks much and travels a great deal to do so, a sort of busybody; hence 'Shokgwe haahlokwe meilolong (Shokgwe is never absent at the ceremonies where boys are 'hardened' - i.e. Everywhere there are unwanted people or invitees.)

(v)Monyokola-tsela - this is reference to a person who is always going about to visit and chatter. He makes footpaths by scratching the ground with his toes.

It may be fairly said that the significance of this game is relevance. The 'answers' must hang together since the game is exhausted when there are no further relevant answers. In a pre-literate society without orthographical memory-aids it is not only important to develop memory but also to channel memory into the narrow confines of the requisite topic. Far from being 'wild' answers the answers are seen as coherent and it is for the listeners to interpret them as such. Most of the time they have a message or a story to tell about the individual, a sort of an autobiography.

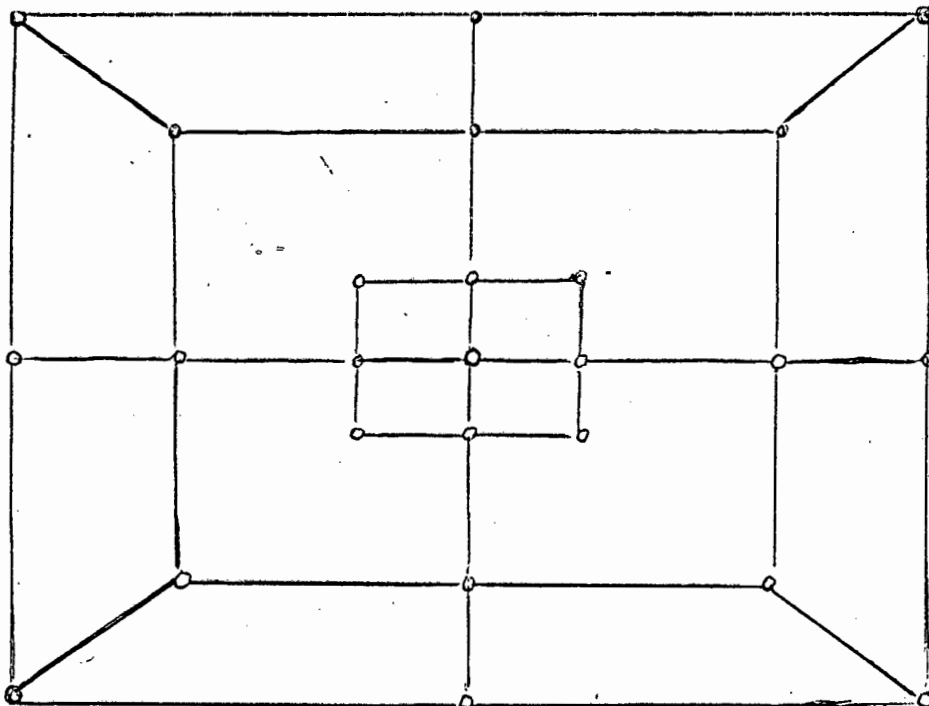
CHAPTER FOUR.

SKILL GAMES.

(1) Morabaraba.

4.1 This is a game of skill primarily played by only two contestants at a time on a diagram scratched on the ground or carved on a flat stone(letlapa). This game was regularly played by the animal herds while their charges grazed and also by the other people who engaged in outdoor occupations. As the children learn by imitation, the boys soon mastered this game and added it to their collection. The players try to form a row of three pieces or objects(usually the stones) in three consecutive places on the diagram. This arrangement is called 'molamu'(a fighting stick) and it entitles the player who accomplishes it first to 'eat'(ja) or capture one of the pieces(called 'dikgomo':cattle) of his opponent to stifle his intentions and success in the same direction. The name 'moraba-raba' means 'moving to and fro' or 'moving by changing the direction repeatedly'.

4.2 The diagram showing 25 places:



This playing board comprises three egocentric rectangles, one within the other with the smallest on the inner side and the biggest on the outer side. A cross cuts them collectively so that each is divided into four equal portions. The two outer ones are further joined at the corners by diagonal lines. A place is at the meeting point of any two lines. The lines joining these places together are called 'ditsela'(roads).

4.3 Each player holds twelve pieces or 'cattle' and the put them one by one in alternating turns until all are settled. In the process of placing them the player aims at a 'three-cattle' formation which wins him one of his opponent's 'cattle'. When all the 'cattle' are settled, the player who placed his 'cattle' first plays first, that is he is now free to move to the odd twenty-fifth place that is usually unoccupied. Movements are compulsory, even if it means pushing the piece to and fro. When a player has been so beaten that only three of his pieces remain on the 'board', these remaining 'cattle' are allowed to skip(tlola) the lines in order to come into the desired formation quickly. The play ends when the opponent has less than three 'cattle' on the 'board'. They are worth less than a 'fighting stick'(molamu). Such a player accepts defeat. At the Welkom, O.F.S. gold mines every victory is recorded as a head of cattle and, at the end of the game, these 'cattle' serve as the 'bride-price'(bohadi) of the player who has been defeated. His bride(imaginary) is chosen for him, usually the choice falls on the ugliest girl known to both players! To avoid a defeat(tlholo) a player may thwart(thiba) the opponent's blow or move by pushing his piece to the third and final position that completes the 'fighting stick'(molamu).

4.4 The atmosphere during this game is war-like - far from being pleasant or amicable. Although a 'stick' is used to win the opponent's 'cattle' it is these very 'cattle' that have to attack, to enter the war(hokena ntweng). Note the following dialogue:

A. Kaotjheha (I have placed the snare for you)

B. Kaothiba. (I have warded off your blow)

A. Kaotjheha ka-mona leka-mona

(I have placed the snare this side
and this side - on all sides)

A. Aema hlooho,tlekelele...

(He is helplessly bewildered)

A. Thiba ka-monwana (Prevent the blow with your finger)

A. Kamootla,kamore:mmaso!(I struck him a hard blow).

In the above game A is the obvious winner. He has to pause to give B chance to react. If B does not, he speaks alone.

4.5 In some games a good player conducts a monologue, with the other party having nothing to say:

Kamotjheha alesiyu,

(I place the snare in his absence)

Aile jwaleng ha-MmaSenate.

(Having gone on a drinking spree at MmaSenate's)

Eitse ha afihla

(It happened that when he arrived)

Kamootla, kamore:twatla!

(I struck him a cracking blow)

Maoto aba-asheba hodimo.

(The legs were eventually in the air)

Motho atla-ashwa hampe yeo.

(What a tragic death for the poor man.)

4.6 Praises are often sung while the 'pieces' are being placed into position:

Futswela ka-metsi,	(Mix your bread with water)
Ngwana waTjhakela,	(Child of Tjhakela)
Bese lele-teng,	(Milk being there)
Lefutswela bana,	(Mixed with the children's food)
Bana badiotlwana.	(Children of other families).

These praises reveal the soreness of the heart at the unending defeats in the hands of better players. They are a way of invoking the aid of his ancestors. This practice is very common among the diviners; their bones have to be praised in order to enable them to discover the ailment of the patient who throws them down.

4.7 Some players cannot stand complete defeat. So, when they realise that their 'cattle' are losing the fight, they collect (hophutha) them and start the game afresh. Nobody ridicules a player who accepts defeat. The victor is usually declared 'Ra-mawa-a-itjang' (Father of the play-methods that eat themselves up, i.e. his stunts are so many that they rust unburnished for lack of strong opponents). One of the general properties of a game is an element of winning or losing something from a less fortunate or skilful player. In S. Sotho games in general and 'morabaraba' in particular, the 'cattle' captured do not become the permanent property of the winner; but after the game they are either returned to the owner or used by the winner in a return bout. This exchange of pieces is usually done either when the defeated player suspects that they are possessed of ill-luck and blames them for his defeat or when the winner wishes to prove that the fault is not in the 'cattle' but in the method followed by the player himself.

The express purpose of the game is to attain individual distinction without discouraging the opponent, hence

Keofa petso (I am giving you chance to hit me, that is, to overlook the obvious intention of the opponent to use his 'molamu').

Ako ikutlwise le-wena (May you also give yourself a pleasant feeling).

So, it is more to derive pleasure in this game than to make the opponent to feel unhappy. Such offers win the best player some willing opponents because he does not strike or hit a fallen opponent.

4.8 This game abounds with a wealth of military jargon:

lewa: derived from -wa(fall) is the position assumed by the divining bones, and now adopted at the morabaraba game,

qholo: a challenge, usually a line drawn on the ground before the fighters start their fight (Hoseha qholo),

lekgutla: a repetition of a move, derived from -kgutla (return),

thwentwere: a double-hit, this word is of ideophonic origin. This position is attained when the 'cattle' are at a tangent position,

tjhitja-manka: a type of 'lewa' where a player starts by placing the pieces from the outside rectangle. This is an invincible stunt (tjhitja=hornless, no place to hold it),

thope, senyadisa-masoha: Another 'lewa' which brings victory very early in the game. That is why it is likened unto a 'maiden who is so attractive that she makes young men marry before they think',

montsha: The name of this 'lewa' speaks for itself. It 'pushes out' any other,

sediba: the 'well' of the playing diagram or board,

hothibella:to besiege, that is to surround the opponent's 'cattle', to mop up,

hongala:to desert one's husband, that is to refrain from intercepting when the opponent 'sets the trap openly',

horokela:to sing praises for one's 'cattle' before they start their attack or while they are assuming their positions,

hokokosa:to lift up a 'stick' and not strike the enemy, that is said of a player who forgets to use a ready 'molamu',

hotshwaela:to mark for, that is to win a game by sheer luck, a fluke,

honwa lewa:to drink a move, that is to master and use a good method of placing the pieces on the board,

hootla mading ampa:to hit at the blood of the belly, that is 'to hit below the belt',

hokgutla sekwele:to return to the fight like a veteran after suffering a temporary defeat,

Phahamisa lehafi keohlabe:Expose your armpit so that I may stab you. This is said when a 'cul-de-sac' has been reached and the opponent is bound to make a fatal move,

hokweletsa mahlo:to turn up one's eyes when dying. This comes at the end of the game when the opponent is defeated.

4.9 Admittedly, there are many variations of this game, and lately some names of modern weapons are mentioned e.g. sethunya (a firearm) from the ideophone 'thu'(explosive sound). The above vocabulary shows how experienced the men were at warfare. The children who play this game ought to be able to place these expressions in their correct perspective. It is a bad practice for women to desert their husbands, but this

is commonly done in order to bring a delinquent husband to justice. A man who possesses many animals is expected to brand a few for his relatives and children. The biggest coward in the Basotho society is the warrior who lifts a weapon but fails to use it in his defence. A good warrior knows precisely where to inflict a fatal blow, that is at a point nearest to the heart. A blow aimed at 'mading ampa' is devastating and causes a stitch which ends a fight prematurely. In this game the primitive weapons of the Basotho are mentioned by name. There are many satirical expressions such as 'Atheoha pere, amatha ka-maoto'(He got off his horse and ran on feet - this is said of a coward who thinks his feet would carry him faster to a place of safety than his mount). 'Oya moo keyang teng'(You are going my way - this is said of the one who is hotly pursued in a fight). There is also some reference to the most-feared thing, the lightning. 'Laduma lesele'(It thundered in a cloudless sky - this is said when one interprets the thundering noises supposed to be produced by one's blow on the victim). 'Morabaraba' is rightly called 'sethetsabadisana'(The deceiver of the herdboys) because it distracts their attention from their herds and flocks until they enter the crops. It needs concentration on the part of the players.

(2)Kgati.

4.10 The skipping rope game is basically an exercise for the legs. Several types of grasses are used to weave the rope, for example, 'letsiri or letswiri'(sour grass), 'lelodi'(rush) and teele'(ordinary weaving grass). This game is never played inside the village because it is believed that it may cause an epidemic or some other form of ill-luck to the residents. The children prefer to play it on a lawn of 'mohlwa'(quick-grass) because on a 'sebataolo'(a bare, hard place) the rope easily snaps off. In some areas where no suitable grass is available, the players use a 'lerapo'(leather thong). After each game the rope is stored in a little hole covered with a 'letlapa'(flat stone) to keep it moist. The rope must be heavy enough to swing with balance but, at the same time it must be light enough so that it may not sprain the arms of those who swing(hobetsa) it. Some rhyme is sung as an accompaniment of the swinging of the rope to mark the rhythm, and, at times, for the performance of certain variations.

4.11 The most important variations of this game are:

- (a)lelate - the players change places as they skip,
- (b)lenyalo - they hold each other in pairs as they skip,
- (c)puu - jump once and bend the head while the rope is swung above it without hitting the ground,
- (d)fuku - speedy swinging of the rope,
- (e)serukgu - a crowded elimination game,
- (f)makena-ka-mahohle - entering from all sides.(The rule is to swing the rope to the right and the players to jump in from the same side),
- (g)setsokotsoko - swing once or twice (as decided upon) and the player goes through without touching the rope,
- (h)tjhele-tjhelle - avoiding the elevated rope and jump when it hits the ground.

4.12 Amongst the children of the other nations the choosing of the leader in a game seems to be presenting a problem. They always want to know who would 'bell the cat'. Aime de Cort¹⁶⁾ says 'Daar de kinderen gewoonlijk elke spel met een aftelrijmpie aanvangen, om te zien wie moet beginne....'

Apart from the rhymes mentioned above there are other 'dips' used to choose the leader, such as wetting the fingers, pulling the sticks, choosing the latecomer, casting the lot, etc. But among the S. Sotho children the choosing of a 'lepe' (leader in this game) is no problem. Most of the players like to lead, to lead first so that they may display their skill. During the course of the play the change of leadership goes on smoothly. The unwritten rules of the game provide instances where the defaulters, etc have to lead or swing the rope, especially where the faults provoke laughter and not anger. In a S. Sotho children's game 'The chief value of competition, then, is that it sets a standard of achievement.¹⁷⁾ After the game nobody is ostracised for having performed poorly. A game leader has the prerogative of selecting the players according to physical size, age groups or ability.

4.13 The following are various types of the 'kgati' games:

(1) Setsokotsoko.

This name is derived from the ideophone 'tsoko' (a whirl). The holders of the grass rope swing with great velocity. They

¹⁶⁾ Aime de Cort, 1929, p.10,

¹⁷⁾ Davies, 1951, p.162.

allow the rope to hit the ground once when the skipper runs through. After one skipper has gone through they lift up the rope once to allow the next one to follow. The chase goes on until one of the skippers trips or fails and has to take the place of one of the turners or rope-holders. The relieved turner takes the place of this unsuccessful skipper.

(11) Motsukunyane.

This name means a 'sharpener' or an 'activator'. It is a faster game for the bigger children. The rope is swung very fast and when it comes down it hits the ground hard to beat a particular rhythm. The following rhyme goes with this game:

Motsukunyan'a sehwele, (The sharp-pointed wild carrot)

'Ilare keqotsula, (When I was pulling you out)

Thotanyana tsaduma, (The little plains rumbled)

Tsahabo Moreketlo, (Those of Moreketlo's country)

Hang! (Once)

Habedi! (Twice)

Hararo, tjhele-tjhelle! (Thrice, slide and slide away!)

The name 'Moreketlo' means a 'shaky thing' and it is derived from 'horeketla' (to tremble or shake). 'Mmantjhelletjhelle' is a species of lizard that runs so fast that one may think it is merely sliding away.

(111) Lebese ladiesele.

This name means the 'ass's milk'. This game is meant for smaller children. The holders of the rope do not throw it completely over, but swing it from side to side with an even motion like the swinging of the pendulum of the clock. The players jump in the opposite direction without touching the rope. All the time the above name is being chanted with rhythm. The defaulters are said to be 'dead' (shwele) and must now hold.

4.14 In a 'kgati' game the following variants or variations are common:

- (1)mokoko(a cock) - skip first on one leg, then on the other,
- (2)lenyalo(marriage) - play in pairs, two close together,
- (3)lelate(secondary) - changing of places, the second player taking the place of the first,
- (4)puu(sound of the wind) - jump once and bend head alternately,
- (5)fuku(noise of the rope) - speedy swinging of the rope,
- (6)serukgu(tumult) - an overcrowded game with many jumpers,
- (7)makena-ka-mahohle(enter from all sides) - use all entrances,
- (8)setsokotsoko(whirl) - rope hits ground once at a time,
- (9)setsokotsoko samaithekelo(buy-for-oneself 'setsokotsoko') - only successful jumpers continue playing,
- (10)tjhele-tjhelle(lizard) - jumpers dive to avoid the swinging rope.

Each of these variations may be played during any skipping game. The leader(lepe) shouts the commands and every player must toe the line. Probably this is the reason why there is no problem in the choosing of a leader.

4.15 When the rope-holders get tired of swinging they deliberately cause the players to default by:

- (1)morepetlane/horepetlisa - weak swinging that is tiresome,
- (2)hofuphula - hard hurried swinging,
- (3)hotlekisa - to cause one to default intentionally,
- (4)holata - to pull in an unready player before the time,
- (5)hofelehetsa - to aim at hitting the back of the outgoing player with the rope. The fault is called
- (6)hotswa ka-diphahlo - to go out with the clothes, that is,

a fault of allowing part of the body to touch
the skipping rope,

- (7)horika/hokgopisa - to swing the rope so that it does not
hit the ground but the ankles of the players.

On the other hand the holders may make a few concessions for
the inexperienced players by allowing them:

- (1)hoemella - to stand near the rope before it is swung,
(2)hokenella - to adjust their swing to help the player who
misses the time when entering,
(3)hokenela letletle - in a group game the winning member
may play during his own turn and that of a
'dead' or absent member of his group.

4.16 To check on the regularity of the swinging rhythm, the
players chant some rhymes. The purpose of these rhymes is,
therefore twofold, to correct the holders of the rope and to
reduce the number of defaulters. Here are the common rhymes:

- (1)Mokoko walla (The cock crowed)
Sefateng samoduwane, (On the weeping willow tree)
Mokoko walla,
Sefateng samoduwane,
Ware:ko-ko-ko! (It said 'ko-ko-ko')
Ware:ko-ko-ko!
Sefateng samoduwane.
- (2)Mmangwane, (my aunt)
Mmangwane,
Mmangwane otshwerwe ke-ditaola(My aunt has been discovered
by the divining bones).
- (3)Makukutwane, (Makukutwane)
Ngwan'amalome, (Child of my maternal uncle)

Onkisa kae,	(Where are you taking me)
Lapeng lammao?	(At your mother's house?)
Mmao oaloya,	(Your mother bewitches)
Oloya kang?	(With what does she bewitch?)
Ka-tjhiritjhiri,	(With the itchy ointment)
Tlhare sabaloi.	(The medicine of the witches).
Nna hakeje tlhapi	(I don't eat fish)
Tlhapi ke-noha,	(A fish is a snake)
Noha yametsi,	(A water snake)
Eankudisa.	(It makes me ill).
(4)Manyesemane,	(English men)
Le-balotsana.	(You are rascals)
Letshetse jwang,	(How did you cross)
Nokeng yaJorotane?	(Over the river Jordan?)

4.17 The content of these rhymes makes an interesting study. In 'Motsukunyane' the phrase 'ilare' is an abbreviation of 'eile-yare'(it happened that when). Although battered out of recognition, its meaning is still clear amongst the children. The name 'moduwane' is pronounced 'moduane' by adults. But it seems the children's word follows the S.Sotho grammatical, or rather morphological rules correctly. The slide between the two vowels u and a is well-defined by the semi-vowel w. This also explains why the passive form of ,for example, -utlwa reverts to -utluwa(be heard).From the word 'Englishman' a Mosotho forms 'Lenyesemane'. The semantic significance of the prefix 'le-' is that it refers to all 'non-' persons,that is, those who do not meet the S.Sotho requirements of what a 'person' should be.

In the first place, anybody whose language is unintelligible to a Mosotho is a 'le-' person, for example, Lekgowa (a White person), Letebele (a member of the Ndebele tribe), Leqhotsa (a Xhosa), etc. This goes further to the physical features, for example, lesofe (an albino: because he does not have a dark pigment), lesele (baby: for the same reason), leqheku (an aged person: he has deteriorated). This deterioration of accepted human behaviour is expressed in words like lehlanya (a lunatic), leshodu (a thief), lefetwa (a spinster), etc. A Mosotho's ear hears '-Nyesemane' when the word 'Englishman' is pronounced. In the same way the English 'hospital' is 'sepetlele' while the Afrikaans one is 'sepatala' in S. Sotho. So the language is tremendously enriched by this double borrowing of foreign words. The word 'tjhiritjhiri' is of ideophonic origin, hence 'tjhiri or tjhirr...' (to slip on the ground), 'tjhipiri' (to glide very quickly), 'tjhipiritsa' (a verb 'to glide'), 'tjhipiriletsa' (to slide towards), 'tjhitjhiri-tjhiri' (a sudden stop with a slide in the ground), etc.

4.18 The satirical intention of 'Mmangwane otshwerwe ke-ditaola' is very clear. The second wife of a polygamous man is notorious of trying to kill the senior wife. Once the senior wife gets ill, the services of a 'ngaka' (doctor) are invoked, and his divining bones (ditaola) usually tell who the cause of her ailment is. Many Basotho still derive satisfaction from such 'diagnosis' by the witchdoctors. In Makukutwane the whole marriage system of the Basotho is brought to the fore. The cousins (bomotswala) are allowed to marry, and this practice is called 'Hobusetsa dikgomo sakeng' (to return the cattle into the cattle kraal). A newly-wed girl (ngwetsi) must transfer to the

home of her husband. But very often it is discovered that the husband's mother persecutes the 'ngwetsi'. The ointment 'tjhiritjhiri' symbolizes this persecution. It is further the duty of the husband's mother 'hobeka ngwetsi' (to receive and educate the daughter-in-law just married). If she is a witch, she may teach her witchcraft (boloi) if she does not take exception. This is primarily the reason why the unmarried person and his/her parents have to be well-known before the two families are linked by matrimony. Very often a girl is disqualified for marriage because her mother is a witch or her father is a drunkard! A 'ngwetsi' must not eat everything put before her. She is expected to avoid (hoila) food until some specific formalities have been done. There is a whole list of food items that a girl is not allowed to partake of, for example, the eggs, tripe, beer, etc. If she is voracious and cannot wait for the proper rites to be performed, this is considered as a sign of her having been badly brought up and can bring her ill-luck, even 'hohlahlwa habohadi' (the return of the bride-price, that is 'divorce'). In the present game the girl won't eat fish because it is a 'snake' in disguise. One of my informants says because many bewitched people vomit reptiles and worms, it is not good for a newly-wed girl who has not yet had her first child to eat fish. In some folk tales women who are not particular about their dishes give birth to snakes, tortoises, frogs, baboons, etc. Reference to the river Jordan is a recent un-Sotho attitude which came to Lesotho with the religious missionaries. This river is a symbol of conversion and all those who go to heaven after their death are bound to cross it like the Israelites from Egypt into Canaan. Any sinner who attempts to cross it naturally drowns. So in this game the English people are praised for having achieved this, although it is by foul means.

(3)Diketo.

4.19 This name is derived from the verb 'hoketa' (to knock against something). It is a game played with 'diketo' (stones). A smooth, bigger and heavier stone called 'mokhu' is thrown into the air, and, before it returns to the hand, something is hurriedly done to the smaller stones on the ground or placed in a little hole. It may be to pull all the 'diketo' out of the hole, catch the 'mokhu', throw it into the air again, and return all excepting one of the stones into the hole again. The number of stones to be retained out of the hole varies in accordance with what has been agreed upon, usually one, two, three, etc. Girls playing this game must sit down cross-legged (hoiphara). Only one girl at a time plays. If she defaults (hotjhena), the next one plays.

4.20 Like in the game of 'morabaraba' above there are different methods of playing (mawa). For every four stones that a player succeeds to pull out, she is supposed to have won one 'kgomo' (cow). In some areas such a winner is allowed to make a mark (hotshwaya) on the ground. In the end these marks are counted to determine the best player of the day. There are also some noteworthy variations whose names the 'moketi' (the player of diketo game) may chant rhythmically while she plays:

- (1) Mpetleke - to hold the 'diketo' with an open palm,
- (2) Motjhobela - to let one fall into a ring formed by the thumb and the index finger of a clenched hand,
- (3) Sothi - to throw them into the air and twist the hand in order to catch them,
- (4) Sepako - a variation of 'Motjhobela', where more than one from the left hand are 'stuffed' into the right hand,
- (5) Qhobo - to allow those thrown into the air to first land

on the outer side of the outstretched hand, and then invert the hand to catch them,

(6) Motjhalatjhalla - a game played with five stones, two are used as 'mokhu's', while they are in the air one of the three on the ground is pinched away.

In some areas another variation of Qhobo called 'Qhau' (Snatch) was demonstrated. The 'diketo' thrown up are allowed to land on the back of an outstretched hand first, and then this hand is inverted in such a way that they are thrown forward and caught. Elsewhere in Lesotho this game is given the name 'Ntjhapo' (Punish me). The rhyme is chanted strictly in the above sequence from (1) to (5).

4.21 The vocabulary used in this game is rich:

Mpetleke from 'hopetleka' (to open wide, expose),

Motjhobela from 'hotjhobela' (to enter into a hole, from the ideophone 'tjhobe',

Sothi from 'hosotha' (to twist, wring), hence 'hosothella motho' means 'to incriminate',

Sepako from 'hopaka' (to stuff into, stop with a cork),

Qhobo from 'Hoqhobela' (to heap on), hence 'hoqhobela majwe hanong' (not to give one a chance to reply),

Motjhallatjhalla is a species of lizards given this name because of their sliding speed.

4.22 The 'hoiphara' posture of sitting is regarded as very decorous in the Basotho society, even during the early days when the women wore hanging skins (seope) like the Korannas. 'Hoshwaya' (to brand) was done differently by the Basotho. They did not 'brand' their animals but they 'made cuts' (phatsa) on their ears. These cuts were in accordance with their totems, e.g. kwena (an arc or semi-circle) of the Bakwena (Crocodile people). 52/.

CHAPTER FIVE.

TOTEMIC GAMES.

5.1 Among the Basotho a totem(seboko) is an animal(and not an inanimate object) which a particular group revere. The members of such a group have to observe certain taboos and usages in connection with their totemic animal, for example, not to eat (hoila) its flesh, and so on, lest some serious misfortune or ill-luck(bomadimabe) befall them. It is very fortunate that most of these revered animals are carnivores and not edible. How each group came to choose its totem is still a mystery. In Leribe I came upon a Mokwena(Crocodile) who had defected and was now praising the monkey(Motshweneng). The reason given for this is that his grandmother, a Motshweneng could not bear any children when she got married into a Bakwena group and the 'ngaka'(doctor) advised that the in-laws wrap (hobipa) her with the skin of a monkey when she conceived. This method worked and a son was born. From that day onwards the descendants of that son of hers became the Batshweneng. Normally a child adopts the totem of its father. To ensure this, the children are taught these totems very early in their lives in the form of this game. When a member takes an oath(hoikana), it is done in the name of this animal. The traits (behavioural and otherwise) of this animal are also adopted as far as social ethics can allow. When ceremonial rites and rituals are performed seniority is calculated in accordance with the totem. Inter-marriage is allowed among the members of the same totemic group as long as they are not blood relatives, namely, parent-child or brother-sister relationship. There are sub-groups or branches in a totemic group but their order of seniority is well marked. Hoernle¹⁷⁾ observes that 'Frequently they(the members of the totemic group) may be scattered over many tribes, as in the case

¹⁷⁾Schäperclaus, 1950, p.92.

of those whose seano is the crocodile(kwena); they are found all over the Sotho area'. Totems are taken as clan-names but not necessarily as objects of worship. Most of the Bafokeng I contacted admitted that they partake of the flesh of the hare(mmutla).

5.2 Mmantilatilane.

Before a child can give its totem or clan-name(seboko) the following Mmantilatilane-dialogue must serve as the introduction. 'Mmantilatilane' is a fictitious person. Among the Basotho it was a common practice of the mothers to call either 'Mmankgukgu' or 'Mmantilatilane' to silence a crying child. Such names instilled fear because this fictive woman came disguised, wearing a mask or a black-painted face and tattered clothes. Her services were called in whenever a child cried for no obvious reason. This introduction is in the form of 'question and answer'. Self-praise is the most essential ingredient of this game. The dialogue goes on as follows for a Motaung(lion) of Ramokgele; for example:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| A. Otswa kae? | (Where do you come from?) |
| B. Ha-Mmantilatilane. | (From Mmantilatilane's place) |
| A. Waja'ng? | (What did you eat?) |
| B. Kaja bohobe. | (I ate bread) |
| A. Wafutswela ka'ng? | (With what did you mix it?) |
| B. Ka-metsi apula. | (With the rain water) |
| A. Thella he! | (Slip away then) |
| B. Kethellele'ng kele-Motaung waha-Ramokgele, etc | |
| (Why should I slip away being a Motaung of Ramokgele). | |

5.3 The question 'Otswa kae?' could also be taken to mean 'What is your origin?'. In which case the reply is 'From the place of the person who is ~~no~~more', because that is what is also meant by 'Mmantilatilane'. Literally 'Mma-Ntila-tilane' is 'the mother of someone who repeatedly strikes the ground with his foot', probably to scare the crying child. The verb stem 'hotila' means to strike the ground with the foot. But the verbal extension '-ana'(reciprocal) assumes a peculiar, specialised meaning because when one strikes the ground with one's foot the ground does not strike the foot back. There are a few such verbs, for example, 'hootlana faatshe'(to fall down hard). Doke and Mofokeng¹⁸⁾ err when they write 'In the case of òmana (scold) and nahana(consider, reflect upon), any reciprocal idea seems to be altogether lost.' These two verb stems do not compare with '-tilana' and '-otlana' which can revert to their basic forms '-tila' and 'otla' respectively, that is, there is no '-òma' and '-naha' with the same meaning. Most of the well-known grammarians, including Guma¹⁹⁾ keep at a safe distance from such verbs because their significance 'is not at all clear'.²⁰⁾ The abbreviated narrative tense forms in lines 3 - 6 are very effectively used in this dialogue. Although most of the S. Sotho interjectives remain untranslatable as separate words, their meaning is very clear in contextual usage. In 'Thella he!' this 'he' means 'do it then'. This is said as a logical conclusion of a conversation where the questioner is now convinced that his respondent has, in fact, the 'setso'(origin).

¹⁸⁾ Doke & Mofokeng, par. 339, p. 166, (1957),

¹⁹⁾ Guma, par. 12.11.41, p. 149, (1971),

²⁰⁾ Guma, 1971, op. cit., par. 12.6(ii), p. 137.

I. Bafokeng.

5.4 Their totem is 'mofoka'(a hare). There are many of them, but for the purpose of this study the following will suffice:

- (i) Kele-Mofokeng waMmadijana,
 (I being a Mofokeng of Mmadijana)
 Motho waha-Mmakgomo-haefete-motse,
 (A person of the Mother of the cow that doesn't pass the village)
 Efeta batho baile masimong;
 (It passes when they have gone to the fields)
 Hobane ha bale-teng bakaebolaya;
 (Because when they are present they may kill it)
 Motho waha-Mmapudum'aDijana,
 (A person of Mmapudumo, Dijana's wife)
 Motho waha-mohlamu omofubedu tlere!
 (A person from a very red rectum)

The above interlinear translation is literal. The gist of this clan-name is that this Mofokeng belongs to group of the hare referred to as the 'cow' that may take a chance to pass close to human habitats when the people are away to do their daily work. This is done because it would be risky otherwise. In these totemic praises the members tend to be unashamed and outspoken, hence the careless use of 'mohlamu omofubedu tlere!' Normally they would be cautious in the use of this phrase which is considered to be vulgar. The contention, however, is that in these ancestral matters the children should be told and taught the truth about their origin regardless of the words employed. What makes the rectum of either the hare(mmutla) or the gnu (pudumo) redder must still be an enigma!

- (ii) Kele-Lehwana labo-Tlalane,
 (I being Lehwana of Tlalane's family)
 Mofokeng waMmapule, teleka-batho,
 (A Mofokeng of the Mother of the rain that chases away the people)
 Teleka bo-mmatsebe-di-morwerwe,
 (That chases away the females with long ears)

Maja-tsebe tsammutla dile-tala;

(The eaters of uncooked/raw ears of the hare)

Bafokeng ka-mahlong ekare dikepolane,

(The facial appearance of the Bafokeng is like that of
the merino sheep)

Ekare nku dinyoloha mokgwabong.

(They are like the sheep ascending from the marshy place)

A 'lehwana' is a member of another Bafokeng clan. His mother's name is literally 'Mother of the Rain'(Mmapule). The 'rain' is capable of chasing away all living animals(men and beasts) to seek shelter. The Bafokeng are so hardy that they eat the whole hare, including the ears, without first cooking it. In appearance they resemble the sheep, yet they are cleverer because they drink from the highly preferred muddy places.

(iii) Kele-Mofokeng waha-MmaShaale,

(I being a Mofokeng of MmaShaale's home)

Motho waha-MmaMokgadi,

(A person of MmaMokgadi's home)

Waha-MmaMotladi waMokgalane,

(Of the home of MmaMotladi, wife of Mokgalane)

Manemane, malema-tsela,

(The calves that plough the road)

Malema-tshimo ka-mmoho,

(The ones that plough the field partly)

Asaephophothe,

(Without finishing it).

This is considered to be a fortunate Mofokeng who can still trace his forebears three generations back. He is a Mofokeng of MmaShaale, of MmaMokgadi, of MmaMotladi. These Bafokeng are the ones who depended more on animal husbandry than agriculture for their livelihood, hence their incomplete cultivation of their fields.

(iv) Kele-motho waha-Tshele yaLekotwana,
(I being a person of Tshele of Lekotwana)

Motho waha-MmaMmulana waMotlatla,
(A person of MmaMmulana of Motlatla)

Lekweekwee kela'ng ha-Tshele,
(What noise is in Tshele's house)

Ekare hosuuwa kobo marapo?
(It is as if the leather strings of a skin blanket are
being tanned?)

Motho yajang mmutla tsebe dile-tala.
(A person who eats the hare with raw ears)

This is a Mofokeng of Tshele of Lekotwana and of MmaMmulana,
the wife of Motlatla. He is one of those who noisily tan their
skin blankets at home, and those who eat the hare with its
ears raw.

(v) Kele-Mofokeng waha-Mmamantwana-finyela,
(I being a Mofokeng of the 'Mother of Retracted Legs')

Mantwana akaalo ka-dinaledi,
(The legs are as many as the stars)

Motho waha-kgomo-nkgate, waMmasebothwana,
(A person of 'the cow that treads upon me', of the 'Mother
with a small dung heap.)

Kgomo ehatile Motjhano mono,
(The cow has tread on Motjhano's toe)

Raselemanane waboPhalo,
(The agriculturalist of Phalo's home)

Motho waMmamohaila-tsepa.
(A person of the 'Mother who crushes the ears of sorghum')

This is a Mofokeng of the clan which has members as many as the
stars. The clan that used cattle to plough their lands regard-
less of the risks involved in such undertakings; the clan that
relied upon agricultural produce for their sustenance.

- ✓ (vi) Kele-Mofokeng waMmaPudungwana waMaphahla,
(I being a Mofokeng of MmaPudungwana of Maphahla)

Motho wkgomo haetswale bosiu,
(A person of a cow that doesn't give birth at night)

Etswala motsheare,
(It gives birth during the day)

Banama lebashemane baeshebile,
(The girls and the boys looking at it)

Letotobala, lenyela-tlatlaneng,
(The unhidden one who empties his bowels into a little
bread basket)

Lelepeletsa masepa ka-dilomo.
(The one who lets the excrement to hang from the precipices)

This Mofokeng of MmaPudungwana of Maphahla belongs to a clan which is unperturbed when young boys and girls witness the calving of a cow in broad daylight, nor the emptying of the bowels in public. The use of the bread basket for this purpose may be a reference to the use of the grass type that hangs at the precipices for weaving such baskets.

- (vii) Kele-Mofokeng waModip'aKomane,
(I being a Mofokeng of Modipa of Komane)

Motho waha-Mmamara aTsikwe,
(A person of the 'Mother of the Armies of Tsikwe')

Motho yeo ereng atlaja,
(A person who, when he is about to eat)

Aeme hothee meriti,
(Waits for the shades to lengthen)

Hobe-hothee leyadiotlwana tsenyenyane.
(And also those of the smaller reeds enclosures in front
of the houses.)

This Mofokeng of Modipa of Komane is a member of a clan of the fighting men of Tsikwe, men who are so hardy that they can spend the whole day without food, only to eat in the evening when they retire.

5.5 These clan-praises teem with the combination of the possessive concords and locative prefixes. These need some elucidation in view of the divergence of opinion among the grammarians about them. The construction 'waha-Mmapudumo' is clearly made up of PC + LP + Poss. The PC 'wa-' is made up of the SC o- of the mo- class plus the possessive formative vowel -a. The locative prefix ha- means the 'place of', therefore it is, in fact, made up of the consonant h- which represents haae(lehaae= a home). and the same possessive formative vowel -a. There are similar constructions like 'hodimo ha-thaba' (literally, the 'hodimo'-part of the mountain). Doke & Mofokeng²¹⁾ note that the 'Older forms for the plurals of the 1st and 2nd persons and of Class 1 of the 3rd person were -eso, -eno and -bo respectively, but they are no longer used with their original meaning in Southern Sotho.' The query here is their -bo instead of -abo. Here we have 'labo-Tlalane' (of Tlalane's family). This construction is made up of the consonant l- of 'lelapa', (the possessive formative vowel -a omitted) and -abo. The reason for this assertion is that in possessive constructions of this sort only the consonant representing the prefix of the possessee is used, hence leso, leno and labo.

5.6 The compound noun 'teleka-batho' is another interesting type of combination. The two parts are ostensibly derived from the verb + noun object. Normally an agentive noun ends in -i as in -ja: moji(eater), but once joined to another part of speech this -i is not used, hence moja-lefa(heir). But our example above shows that the initial consonant has been alveolarized. This is usually done when abstract nouns ending in -o are formed, for example, -leleka = teleko(expulsion). The 'expulsion of the people' is 'teleko yabatho' which can be shortened to 'teleka-batho' - but then there is a slight difference in tone. Such

²¹⁾ Doke & Mofokeng, 1957, p.136, Note (iii).

nouns are common in S.Sotho e.g. pha-badimo(giver of the ancestors), pala-matlo(loafer, one who counts the houses), etc. This omission of -i persists in 'letotobala' and 'lelepeletsa' in the above clan-praises.

5.6 The Bafokeng, the ancestor tribe or clan of the Basotho, are very fond and proud of their totemic animal. They refer to it as 'kgomo haefete motse'. The analogy between the hare and the cow shows how indispensable they consider the latter to be in their lives. These 'maja-tsebe tsammutla diletala' wish to show that to them the raw ears of the hare are not nauseating because they revere it. Ellenberger²²⁾ says of them 'Bafokeng bana bammutla ojewa tala bafela baahisana leBathepu, baikopanya lebona ka-puo lomekgwa, hape leka-honyallana lebona.' (These Bafokeng of the hare that was eaten raw eventually lived with the Bathepu, mixed with them by language and habits, also by inter-marrying with them.) They say 'manemane' (for manamane calves), 'ditjepolane' (for dikepolane: merino sheep) etc. They practised 'honyala sethepu' (polygamous marriage). It is embarrassing to the Basotho when children witness a calving cow or an adult person having a bowel motion in public. In their clan-praises the Bafokeng seem to consider these acts as decent and virtuous. Ellenberger²³⁾ attributes this to their association with Barwa (Bushmen) whose daughters they married. When it came to soil cultivation they were lazy, hence 'malema-tshimo ka-mmoho'. Ellenberger²⁴⁾ says 'basekametseng botsweng, babileng-bakgathalla borena' (inclined to laziness, and eventually neglected their kingship). Basotho are very cautious in the use of words like 'masepa' (faeces, excrement). Instead they prefer words like 'mantle' or 'lethete'. This has led to the formation of the 'Hlonepha' language, commonly used by the newly-wed girls.

²²⁾ Ellenberger, 1928, p.12, ²³⁾ p.10, ²⁴⁾ p.6.

The distribution of the Bafokeng spreads over a wide area. I contacted them in the horse-shoe shaped area starting in the west at Kimberley, Kuruman, Taung, Vryburg, Mafeking, Rustenburg, Witwatersrand, 'Ntswana-Tsatsi' (near Vrede, O.F.S.), Qwaqwa (Witsieshoek), eastern O.F.S., Leribe and Maseru districts of Lesotho. They were indeed running swiftly like the hare (hofoka-ela). Probably they did not cook the ears of the hares they ate so that they might not 'destroy their hearing faculty' with the belief that they too could hear the approach of their enemies from afar. The simile the feet 'akaalo ka-dinaledi' also suggests that they were numerous. The name 'Phalo' (skin scraper) goes well with 'hosuuwa letlalo' to refer to the traditional dress of all the Basotho. They fondly refer to everyone of them as 'Phoka' (from hofoka: to blow of the wind, as the hare runs). They are circumspect in the words they use, e.g., they prefer 'tsebe-dimorwerwe' (ears placed higher up in the head) instead of 'tsebe-ditelele' (long ears), as in the case of the donkey.

II. Bakwena.

5.7 The ruling senior chiefs of Lesotho today are the descendants of Moshweshwe who was of the Bakwena (Crocodile) clan. He was of the lineage of Monaheng, the son of Tsholwane, the twin brother of Tsholo. These twins were the sons of Molemo, the son of Motebang, the son of Napo, the son of Mosito, the son of Kwena (Crocodile). The Bakwena usurped the throne of the Bafokeng in Lesotho because of their lethargy referred to above. The son of Tsholo was Modibedi. The clan-praises of the Bakwena of Modibedi and Monaheng will suffice for this study:

(i) Kele-Mokwena waha-Modibedi,

(I being a Mokwena of Modibedi's home)

Motho waRaphirinyana, seraha-Lesetedi,

(A person of Raphirinyana, the kicker of the Bastard)

Ha an'alerahile, en'ele-lamang?

(If he has kicked him, who was his owner?)

En'ele-laKwena yahotswa bodibeng,

(He was of the Crocodile that once emerged from the deep water)

Basadi basiye dinkgo sedibeng,

(So that the women left their water jugs at the well)

Bakene haae batshwere mese ka-matsoho.

(And enter into the village holding their skirts in their hands)

This Mokwena of Modibedi is a terror who kicks his foreign servants(slaves) and expects nobody to question him. When this Crocodile emerges from the deep water of the fountain, the women leave their water jugs and flee into the village with their skirts in their hands.

✓ (ii) Kele-Mokwena waha-Kadi'abo-Tsholo,

(I being a Mokwena of the home of Kadi of Tsholo's family)

Motho waha-Monaheng emotle,

(A person of the home of a good Monaheng)

Maila-hongwathelwa,

(The one who avoids to be served with food)

Ngwan'amaja-hosatjhesa,

(The child who eats while the food is still hot)

Ngwan'asajeng polokwe yamaobane.

(The child who does not eat the bread roll of yesterday)

He is a Mokwena of the house of Kadi, the brother of Tsholo, whose father is also known as a good Monaheng. He hates to be served with food. He likes his meals hot and fresh.

5.8 Amongst these people the personal name 'Seraha' is still found. The prefix Se- clearly suggests an 'expert' when compared with Mo-(ordinary). So these Bakwena were terrors. They did not only terrarise their servants but also the other people. The origin of the name 'Lesetedi' seems to stem from the times of wars when men were captured and used even for cutting the nails of their captors(hosetela = to cut nails for). As for the prefix 'Le-' it always referred to 'non-persons' as already explained above. Earlier than 1833 there were some Griquas(Masetedi) who lived or hunted near Philippolis under Adam Krotz. Lewatle²⁵⁾ gives a ridiculous account of how Kadi acquired the name Monaheng. A Bushman leader wanted to barter his land for dagga, and he said to Kadi: 'Omphe matokwane, Mosotho waka; nna ketlaonea monaheng(naha) waka omotle.' (Give me dagga, my Mosotho; as for me I shall give you my beautiful country). From that day onwards his people nicknamed him Monaheng! The 'water' relationship between Mokwena and Modibedi is clearer when reference is made to bodibeng and sedibeng. Rhyme in these lines is by mere coincidence. A peep into the traditional life of the Basotho is given where a typical rural atmosphere is created with women going to draw water and fleeing into the village holding up their skirts so that they do not impede the movement of their legs. It is unusual for a Mosotho husband to dish out the food for himself. But here we are dealing with a proud Mokwena who is fastidious. After cooking the Basotho women preserve bread by shaping it into rolls(dipolokwe) which could be used on the following day.

²⁵⁾ Lewatle, Morija, 1952, p. 1.

5.9 Most of the Bakwena children I contacted did not know the praises of their clan. All they could say was that as, for example, 'maila-ngwathelo' they were of Mokotedi's lineage or that the Bakwena of Mokgeseng were of Monaheng's lineage, etc. In the foreword to Guggisberg's²⁶⁾ book on the crocodiles Vollner says 'Crocodiles have an immensely long evolutionary history dating back to mesozoic times - the period of the dinosaurs. For about 140-million years, while the other reptiles became extinct, they remained the dominant predators of tropical and some sub-tropical lakes and rivers. They are long-living and widely distributed - in America, Africa, Australia, New Guinea and South-East Asia.' The Bakwena are found among the tribes living in the area already described in par. 5.6. above. These people believe that they are a hardy type and that where other species have failed to survive they have adapted themselves down the ages to whatever circumstances were imposed on them, like the crocodiles themselves. They, however, do not partake of their venerated animal. The Siamese regard alligator flesh, said to taste like lobster, as a great delicacy. In some parts of China crocodile is sold in the markets. Recent research has revealed that the crocodiles are not as voracious feeders^{as} they are said to be. This agrees with a Mokwena calling himself 'ngwan'asajeng polokwe yamaobane'. They are circumspect in the choice of their dishes. Their pet name is still 'Kwena' and their village 'Kweneng'.

26) Guggisberg, 1972, p.i - iv(foreword).

III. Bataung.

5.10 Ellenberger²⁷⁾ says 'Basotho babangata baetsa phoso ka-holekanya hoba kaofela habona batswa Ntswana-Tsatsi; athe hahojwalo'. (Many Basotho make a mistake by surmising that all of them originate from Ntswana-Tsatsi; whereas it is not so.) Among those who came from elsewhere are the Bataung whose totemic animal is the lion. It was their great ancestor Thulwane who chose this totem when he defected from the Bafurutshe circa 1640. What is interesting in their history is how the Bataung of Ra-Mokgele chose a hippo(kubu) as their new totem. It is said that one day this 'river horse'(hippopotamus) emerged from the river and ran into the village of the Bafokeng of Komane (already referred to above). The Bataung of Montwedi saw it and intercepted it so that it could not return to the water. They killed it when their dogs caught it. Then their paramount chief, Thulo demanded the dead animal; but Ra-Mokgele broke the custom by refusing with it. From that day onwards these Bataung of Ra-Mokgele chose 'kubu' as their new totem, and they became known as Bakubung(People of the Hippopotamus).

5.11 A few clan-praises of the Bataung:

(1) Kele-Motaung waha-Hlalele,

(I being a Motaung of Hlalele's house)

Emonyenyane walebese lakgomo,

(The young one of the cow's milk)

Motho waha-MmaNthethe'aMorapedi,

(A person of MmaNthethe of Morapedi)

Waha-MmaSesane'aNkgope,

(Of the house of Sesane's mother, wife of Nkgope)

Ere ha atlashwa, apongwe hlocho,

(One whose head has to be cut off to ensure his death)

Asale akunyakunya ka-mahetla.

(So that he remains breathing with his shoulders).

²⁷⁾Ellenberger, 1928, p.9.

These Bataung of Hlalele are considered to be the most senior clan. Kgalala²⁸⁾ says of them:

Motaung waha-Nthethe,
(Motaung of Nthethe's house)

Motaung waha-Morapedi,
(Motaung of Morapedi's house)

Hlalele petu lelekana molala.
(Hlalele's collar-bone is big enough for his neck)

Hlalele monna hlooho ekgolo!
(Hlalele is a man with a big head)

Habo-Tau haho-marena amangata,
(In Tau's family there aren't many chiefs)

Morena ke-Hlalele aivotshi.
(The chief is Hlalele alone.)

In addition to this there is a song which is commonly known by their children:

Re-Bataung baMatjhela, (We are Matjhela's Bataung)

BaNthethe'aMorapedi, (Of Nthethe of Morapedi)

BaTebejane'aMatlatsa, (Of Tebejane of Matlatsa)

Tlatsa Tebejane. (Support Tebejane.)

This song epitomizes their genealogical tree. While Tau, the son of Tebejane (a twin brother of Tebele), was still at the 'mophato' (circumcision school) the Maphuthing of Transvaal attacked his father's village. Tebejane's men decided to burn down this 'mophato' before the enemies came and defiled it. So Tau got the name 'Letjhela' (One burnt inside the mophato). His regiment or comrades were referred to as 'Matjhela'. As for Nthethe he is the father of Tebejane. Morapedi is the father of Nthethe. This fully explains the content of the 'clan-song' of these Bataung.

²⁸⁾ Kgalala, 1956, p.8.

(ii) Kele-Motaung waba-Rapuleng,

(I being a Motaung of Rapuleng's)

Motho waba-Mmankgwana,

(A person of those of the Mother of the little pot)

Waba-Rasekga-metsane,

(Of the Father of scoop a little water)

Wametsi apula.

(Of the rain water.)

(iii) Kele-Motaung waha-Raphiri,

(I being a Motaung of Raphiri's house)

Yeo ereng ha abona dihlahlana ka-metsing,

(When he sees some shrubs in the water)

Are:Jo nna! Dihlahlana dihlahile, retlatshela;

(He shouts with joy that they would cross now that the
shrubs have appeared)

Ele-ha retshela noka,

(That being when we cross the river)

Noka etletse.

(The river being full.)

(iv) Kele-Motaung waha-Ramokgele,

(I being a Motaung of Mokgele's father's house)

Lekolokotwana laha-Mmatshola-nku,

(Lekolokotwana of the house of the Mother who removes the
pot of mutton from the fire)

Oentshe masapong,

(So that she may debone it)

Rettle-retsebe hoeja hamonate.

(So that we may enjoy eating it.)

5.12 The following constructions need some comment:

'Hlalele petu lelekana molala'

The subject of this sentence is not Hlalele but 'lepetu', hence
the SC le-. This could simply be written down in another form:

'Lepetu laHlalele lelekana molala'

(The collar-bone of Hlalele is big enough for his neck.) But the intended effect would be lost, namely, to lay emphasis on the possessor. So the former sentence could be translated as: 'As far as Hlalele is concerned, his collar-bone is big enough for the neck.' - not necessarily 'for his neck' now. Another one:

'Hlalele monna hlooho ekgolo'

Literally this means 'Hlalele the man the head is big', but to say 'Hlalele is a man with a big head' we need:

'Hlalele ke-monna yahlooho ekgolo'

All these constitute some queer type of omission, namely, of the possessive la-, the copular ke- and the RC ya-. However, the fact must not be lost sight of that Hlalele and monna are in apposition, while in 'Hlalele petu' the two nouns are in a possessive relationship.

5.13 These clan-praises of the Bataung are a further illustration of the current assertion that they are the most boastful clan among the Basotho. From them it can be deduced that the lion is such a terror that it has to be decapitated to ensure its death. The words used here comprise a superb imagery in the decapitating blow followed by the pain felt by the twitching body which, because of the loss of weight of the head is moving to and fro unanchored. The painful panting can be felt. This also serves as a reminder of the cruelties of the Difaqane (Wars of Extermination/Devastation). Praises are showered on the physique of the lion: the neck is big and strong enough to carry the big head. The belief in the importance of a big head is also accentuated. (Cp headman, headmaster, etc.) A name like 'Morapedi' is a clear reference to their ancestor worship, more so when the name 'kgomo' is also being mentioned. They lived on its milk and meat. A very tasty dish of 'lekgotlwane' (minced meat) is

prepared by removing the bones from the meat and crushing(ho-kgotla) it; despite the common saying 'nama emonate lesapong' (Meat is tastier near the bone). Rain, like 'kgomo' also enjoys praises and the occasion is marked indelibly by names such as Pule,Puleng,Pulane and Motlalepule(One who comes with the rain). Amongst the Bataung the masculine prefix Ra-(father of) applies to both firstborn sons and daughters equally, hence Ra-Puleng and Ra-Mokgele. The Bakwena, for example, name the newly-weds only after the name of their firstborn son. If the girl does not give birth to a son, she still gets such a name in anticipation. In the olden days the rivers had no bridges,so the travellers had to wait until the flood abated before they could cross. The moment the river weeds appeared above the water, they felt safe to cross because the ground would not be deeper in. Otherwise the rivers were crossed at the 'madiboho' (drifts). The 'mophato' played an important role in the life of the Basotho. The son of the chief was the decisive factor in the organization of such a 'school'. The sons of the commoners would wait for him to be of age and enter(hoqat ha) the 'school' with him. If his new name of the 'mophato' is Letjhela, then his mates are Matjhela; and may even form their own regiment at war. The Bataung regarded Hlalele as the only chief they recognized:'Morena ke-Hlalele ainnotshi'. For a situation like this it is always said 'hahopcho-pedi'(there is no second bull or double-bulled rule). In the same way, Setaung(a dialect) is more important to the typical Motaung than Sesotho, and it can easily be detected when they speak. Their pet names are Tau(lion), Sebata(beast of prey) and Namane etshehla(a yellow calf). This raises another important issue whether the Basotho were colour-blind or not. The lion is generally considered to be brownish-yellow or tawny. But the

Basotho 'confuse' colours, for example, -tala(green) and -putswa (grey) could also represent 'blue': lehodimo leleputswa(blue sky), moriri omoputswa(grey hair), metsi amatala(green water), lewatle leleputswa(grey sea), etc. But in 'bohobe bobotsho' this -tsho does not mean 'black' but 'dark' against 'white or light bread'. It would be appropriate to call 'brown bread' 'bohobe bobosootho'. But when it came to the colours of the cattle the Basotho make no mistakes, they excel!

IV. Bahlakwana.

5.14 In par.5.7 it has already been stated that Napo was the grandson of Kwená. While at Ntswana-Tsatsi Napo married a Mofokeng woman who bore him three sons, namely, Motebang, Diema and Molapo. Diema is the father of the Bahlakwana, a branch of the Bakwena clan. In the praise-poems a baboon(tshwene) is called 'sehlako' and it is probably this animal which the Bahlakwana chose as their totem, hence 'Mohlako' and the diminutive 'Mohlakwana'. Here are two clan-praises of these people:

✓ (i) Kele-Mohlakwana waha-MmaTau,

(I being a Mohlakwana of MmaTau's home)

Waha-MmaTau waha-Thibela,

(Of MmaTau's of Thibela's home)

Bahlakwana lebaetele mariha,

(Bahlakwana should be visited in winter)

Hlabula bafutswella matlung.

(In summer they 'mix their food' inside the houses).

This Mohlakwana of MmaTau of Thibela's home advises that the Bahlakwana should be visited in winter only because in summer they 'mix it up' inside their houses. The literal meaning of 'hofutswella' is 'to mix bread with a liquid like milk or gravy'. This word then appeared to be out of context here. An adult member of this clan reluctantly explained that this meant

having sex inside the houses during the daytime when it is hot.

- (ii) Kele-Mohlakwana waha-MmaTeele yamotawane,
(I being a Mohlakwana of the home of the Mother of weaving
grass that grows in the marshes)

Maila-ngwathelo,
(One who avoids being dished out for)

Maja-polokwe kaofela etjhitja,
(The eater of the whole round bread roll)

E-sengwathwana hakeeje.
(Morsels I don't eat)

This Mohlakwana of MmaTeele does not want his food tampered with, he serves himself with full bread rolls because he does not eat what others have left after meals.

5.15 The line 'Maila-ngwathelo' clearly explains the relationship between the Bahlakwana and the Bakwena of Kadi'aTsholo in par. 5.7 (ii) above. They liked food but would not like to be served by a person they do not trust because 'sejeso' (food-poisoning) was rife in their day. A bread roll that had already been cut was no longer fresh and could well have some poison or medicine inserted beforehand. It is amazing that they should expose their sexual behaviour in this manner, but this is a way of showing how well they adopt the behavioural pattern of their totemic animal 'mohlako'. The 'teele yamotawane' is type of sedge that grows in the marshy places and was used mainly for weaving food receptacles like sethebe (a mat on which the flour falls from a millstone), seroto (a basket without a handle, usually carried on the head), sesiu (a huge grain basket), etc.

5.16 An interesting point has been raised by the part of speech of the linking words in these clan-praises:

- (i) nouns: Kele-Mohlakwana waha-MmaTau,
Waha-MmaTau waha-Thibela

(ii)temporal expressions:

Bahlakwana lebaetele mariha,
Hlabula bafutswella matlung.

(iii)qualificatives:

Maja-polokwe kaofela etjhitja,
Esengwathwana hakeeje.

Linking is a traditional characteristic of S.Sotho poetry, but here this has been taken a step further. The two nouns in a locative relationship(MmaTau's) cannot be joined by any conjunction like in the case of mariha and hlabula where hobane (because) could be used. Both etjhitja and esengwathwana refer to the same subject 'polokwe', without 'maja-'. If 'maja-polokwe' is the subject then its SC is a-. This separation of the parts that comprise a compound noun for the purpose of qualifying them individually has never been emphasized hitherto:

Moja-lefa ohlokahetse(The inheritor has passed away)

Ke-moja-lefa lesetseng(He is the inheritor of the remaining inheritance)

Well-known grammarians like Doke & Mofokeng and Cole do not go into this problem. Guma²⁹⁾ writes 'In them(nouns with complex or compound stems) there may be more than one recognisable prefixal morpheme. In all such cases, however, it is the first prefix that is dominant and therefore controls the concord. Every other morpheme thereafter, even if it is a dominant prefix elsewhere, now forms part of the complex stem'. This does not apply to the whole problem. There at least two possible solutions to this problem. First, that the attribute 'lesetseng' must be joined to the rest of the compound noun, thus mojalefalesetseng. Second, moja be separated from the rest of the compound noun. Both cannot be done because the relative clause 'lesetseng' cannot be used without the concord 'le-'; and 'moja' needs the final -i instead of -a if it has to be separated from 'lefa'. If this

²⁹⁾Guma, 1971, p.83, par. 4.40.

is done, the new wording would be 'moji walefa' (the eater of the inheritance). Such a possessive construction can be shortened to 'moj'alefa'. This study now proposes to take a decision in this matter, and this decision will disillusion many famous grammarians. A hint has already been given in par. 5.6 above.

In S. Sotho the general rule governing the formation of agentive nouns is that the formative vowel -i substitutes the final -a. So the final -a in, for example, moja- is the PC vowel; and the nouns like 'mojalefa' (which were previously said to be retaining the -a of the verb) are nothing else but abbreviations of the possessive constructions like 'moji walefa'. Also note

moetsadibe (sinner) from moetsi wadibe (maker of the sins),
bojadikata (great famine) from boji badikata (eating of rags),
sethibamathe (the latest wife) from sethibi samathe (saliva-
stopper: She stops the saliva of her husband),
lejahlapi (fish eater) from leji lahlapi (eater of the fish:
a nickname for the Englishman).

All this means that what are joined together here to form the 'compound or complex noun' are, in fact, shortened form of

- (i) Possessee (Prefix + verbal root + i),
- (ii) Possessive Concord (Consonant of Prefix + Possessive Formative -a) and
- (iii) Possessor (Noun Object).

A 'naked' verb cannot be joined to a noun to form a new noun.

V. Batshweneng.

5.17 Ellenberger³⁰⁾ writes that these people originally came from the Tugela River in Natal and they fled into the present O.F.S. from the wrath of Tjhaka. These people also defected from the Bakwena as stated above in par. 5.1. Their totemic animal is tshwene (baboon or monkey). They are the descendants of Motshwene the son of Tsulo:

- (i) Kele-Motshweneng waMmaKgiba,
(I being a Motshweneng of MmaKgiba),
Motho waLekokoto laNtshimana,
(A person of Lekokoto of Ntshimana)
Kgiba ohahile ntlo thabeng,
(Kgiba has built a house in the mountain)
Kgiba leme leletsho ,
(Kgiba's tongue is black)
Ke-hokoma ditlhare.
(Because of swallowing the medicines.)

He is a Motshweneng of Kgiba's wife; Kgiba the son of Lekokoto the son of Ntshimana (the twin brother of Ntshime). Kgiba stays (like a monkey) in the mountain and his tongue is discoloured by the medicines he regularly swallows.

- (ii) Kele-Motshweneng waha-Kgiba,
(I being a Motshweneng of Kgiba's house)
Kgiba waMabatla,
(Kgiba of Mabatla)
Waphororo yametsi
(Of the waterfall)
Matheola-kgwaaba;
(That brings down the jackal)
Waha-MmaSoothwana, molapong.
(Of the house of Soothwana's mother at the river).

³⁰⁾Ellenberger, 1928, p.147.

These clan-praises dove-tail well with the written history of these people. Ntshime and Ntshimana were twin brothers who escaped the massacre by the Mahlubi of Bungane³¹⁾. The river and the waterfall might be reference to the Tugela. The favourite habitat of the baboons is the mountain. If Kgiba builds his house there, it is because he is trying to assume the habits of his totemic ancestor. The satirical remark that 'leme leletsho' elucidates the belief which these people had in medicines. Their clan emanates from their belief that a baboon's skin would prevent infanticide among them. Batshweneng are well-known herbalists among the Basotho.

VI. Basiya.

5.18 This Basotho clan is of Kgatla origin. Mosiya the son of Tabane and MmaThulare hailed from the Northern and North-Western parts of the Transvaal of today:

✓ Kele-Mosiya, motobatsi,
(I being a Mosiya, the discoverer)

Motho waha-Mma-ntsha-thebe-diome,
(A person of the home of the Mother of 'take out the shields
so that they get dry)

Disenne-diomela mokgwabo tlung,
(They shouldn't get dry in the house, still soiled by mud)

Diomele ka-ntle mabaleng.
(They should get dry outside in the courtyard.)

Of this 'feline' clan Ellenberger³²⁾ writes 'Basiya ene-ele-batho bamaoto abobebe, baatisang holwana kamehla ka-hohle' (The Basiya were a nimble-footed people who often engaged in wars all over). Well, 'maoto abobebe' are like those of the cat, their totemic animal. They spent most of their time making 'dithebe' (shields) for use at war. A wet skin used for making shields could easily

³¹⁾ Ellenberger, 1928, p.148,

³²⁾ Ellenberger, 1928, p.80.

collect dust on the floor of the hut; therefore these shields had to be exposed outside in the courtyard so that they may dry up and shed the dust they collected(mokgwabo). A cat has several names: mosiya(a wild cat, but also used for a domestic cat), qwaabi(an enstranged domestic cat which lives on field mice(ditadi), birds, etc), setsetse(a wild cat which is bigger than the domestic one and plays havoc in the fowl run), and thallere(an adorned way of referring to a dish of cat meat). Because of its good senses of smell, etc the cat has been able find out what human beings were not aware of, for example, the presence of a snake in the hut, the whereabouts of the mice, etc. For this reason it earned itself the title 'motobatsi'. This useful verb 'hotobatsa' comes from 'holoba'(to pinch with the nails) and a cat should be called 'motobatsi'(one who pinches with the nails). Its neuter form is 'holobala'(to be pinched). Cp. with 'holemala'(to be injured).

VII. Bakubung.

✓ 5.19 This insignificant clan is derived from the Bataung. Their totem is kubu(hippopotamus):

Kele-Mokubung waMohlamatsana,
(I being a Mokubung of Mohlamatsana)

Mohloka-kodi,
(One without a defect)

Motseba-tsababang,
(But knows those of others)

Motho waLeswetsa lamaitjadi,
(A person of Leswetsa who spread all over)

Mohale, letswa-hlakeng,
(A brave man from the reeds)

Motho wamokopu omotolodi,
(A person of a black pumpkin with white spots)

Leontshe masimong.
(You pull it out of the fields).

He is a Mokubung who sees the defects of others and not his own. He is a descendant of Leswetsa's people who are distributed all over the country. He is a brave man who originates from the reeds. He is like a black pumpkin with white spots which the peasants always eradicated from their lands.

5.20 A hippo is a quadruped which lives in the rivers. These Bakubung consider themselves as a clan from the reeds which grow in the rivers. That the original forebears of the Basotho came from the reeds of Ntswana-Tsatsi is commonly believed by them. As a result, whenever a woman has given birth, a reed is usually planted at the entrance to report the event. The African hippo has a black colour and the Bakubung assume this colour as their distinguishing badge. But the white spots on the 'pumpkin' show bastard or hybrid traits which are unacceptable. Such illegitimate children were unwanted and they were 'eradicated' from the 'fields'. The Bakubung were strict as far as social behaviour was concerned. This cleared their consciences so that they could irrevocably criticise the other clans. But that did not make them irreproachable either; they 'sowed themselves' (maitjadi) all over like weeds. They were a proud clan. The semantic significance of the prefixes le- in 'letswa-hlakeng' and ma- in 'maitjadi' is that they behaved extra-ordinarily and, indeed, deserved expulsion from human society.

VIII. Batloung.

5.21 The elephant(tlou) was not the original totemic animal of these people. Reverend Lemue, an early French missionary in Lesotho, is quoted by Ellenberger³³⁾ thus: 'Bakaa bane-babina tlou, athe kgale bo-ntatabona bane-babina noto(tshepe) jwaleka Barolong' (The Bakaa were praising the elephant where-as long ago their fathers praised the anvil(an iron piece) as

³³⁾ Ellenberger, 1928, p.194.

Barolong). These people of Rolong origin are the descendants of chief Mokopane the son of Kekana who lived near Zoutpans-berge in the Transvaal. It was when they fled from their enemies and crossed the Limpopo River that they were given the name Bakaa. But when they sought refuge from the Basotho, they were compelled to choose a new totem - a living thing. They dispensed with 'noto' and 'sang' the elephant(tlou). As a leaderless group of refugees or fugitives they sing:

✓ Kele-Motloun^g waha-Maloka,
(I being a Motloun^g of Maloka)

Tlou efula haae,
(The elephant grazes at home)

Ke-hohloka badisa.
(Because of lack of herdsman.)

5.22 Maloka is a Sothoised Zulu or Ndebele name 'Malunga'. He might have met these people when they fled across the Limpopo River and became their leader. Batloun^g were very quarrelsome. One time they clashed with their neighbours Makgolokwe over the pumpkins. As a clan of Rolong origin they still claimed (like all Barolong) that they should taste the first pumpkins before any other clan. They were scattered in all directions and taken as slaves or servants by the other clans. So the 'elephant' is still grazing at home because it has nobody to watch over it.

5.2 In Lesotho today there are still some clans who claim that they are of Sotho origin in spite of their betraying names. To cite only one of those:

Kele-Mothimokgolo waPokane yaSeele,
(I being Mothimokgolo of Pokane of Seele)

Wasolo-laesa,
(Of the clearing sky)

Leya-sebakeng;
(The one who goes into the sky)

Waha-ntlo-haekwalwe ka-hlooho yamonna,
(Of the house that is not closed with a man's head)

Ekwalwa ka-thithi yamosadi makenelong.
(It is closed with a woman's fringed skirt at the entrance).

Pokane refers to Bungane, a Hlubi chief who came from Natal. Mothimokgolo is More-moholo which means a big tree or a good medicine. Seele is a toad in Zulu. For the lightning the Zulu word 'izulu' is usually 'letsolo or letolo' in S.Sotho. However, this does not refuse this clan the membership of the originally multi-racial Sotho nation of Moshweshwe!

5.24 One of these 'foreign' Basotho, an aged woman by the name of Ntswaki at Mafikeng, near Roma in Lesotho gave me an alternative method of introducing these clan-praises games:

A.Lebese leile kae?

(What has happened to the milk?)

B.Lejewe ke-dintjanyana.

(It has been eaten(sic) by the dogs)

A.Diile kae?

(Where have they gone?)

B.Diilotsoma bokotoko.

(They have gone to hunt for pieces of human dung)

A.Thella he!

(Slip away then)

B.Kethelleleng kele-Letsitsi laha-Tlamini.....

(Why must I 'slip away' being a Letsitsi of Tlamini)

It is interesting to note how the Zulu names 'Mzizi' and 'Dlhamini' have been Sothoised into Letsitsi and Tlamini.

5.25 In conclusion, a few things are noteworthy in these totemic games. The very fact that they are introduced with a dialogue supports their being written down in verse form. By omitting the concords, etc the lines are short and to the point. The linking words, like 'MmaTau' in par.5.14, also point towards a linear arrangement. The maximum number of lines is six. The possessive links wa-, waha- and waba- are the main feature. Most of these clan-praises teem with some obsolete or archaic words and expressions. Their obscurity has rendered them incomprehensible, not only to the children but also to their parents. There are allusions which could not be traced by any other means than by personal contact with the members of the clan concerned. The importance of a mother is highly accentuated. The behavioural pattern of the members is given in terms which are so outspoken that they brink on vulgarity. The imagery in, for example, 'lelepeletsamasepa', 'futswella tlung', 'raha Lesetedi', etc remain indelible in the listener's or reader's mind. Boasting is a virtue rather than a vice because the member assumes that the traits and habits of his totem are so well-known that to mention them does not constitute a breach of 'cautious language'. The customs and the beliefs of the people are securely embalmed in these games. Contrary to the findings of the earlier students of anthropology, a totemic animal can be eaten by a member who 'sings' praises to it, a totem could be abandoned in favour of another depending on the turn of the events, and the Basotho preferred a living animal as a totem to an inanimate object. The genealogical trees of the rulers and of the members of the clan are given very accurately. Some personal names are still a distinctive mark of one's clan, for example, Mohlomi is a Mokwena, Moletsane is a Motaung, Kgiba a Motshweneng, etc.

CHAPTER SIX.

DRAMATIC GAMES.

6.1 Drama and games are almost inseparable. A game is a contest played according to rules and decided by skill, strength, luck, etc. But to dramatize is to make a dramatic scene of a play. Gomme³⁴⁾ gives a better definition of a dramatic game in the following words 'a play or amusement which consists of words sung or said by the players, accompanied by certain pantomimic actions which accord with the words used, or, of certain definite and settled actions performed by the players to indicate certain meanings, of which the words are only a further illustration'. All this boils down to the fact that the dramatic representation of a contest has become formulated in a definite game, the dramatic game. To support this Nyembezi³⁵⁾ writes 'dancing is done to the accompaniment of music which requires the dancers to be able to fit in the dance rhythms to the music'. Most of the S. Sotho children's games are accompanied by some rhyme which may or may not be sung.

(1) Tebetebe.

6.2 This game is usually played at a silted part of the river where there is some wet sand or sediment into which the feet could sink up to the calves. While the legs sink because of their up and down movement, the child chants:

Tebetebe, nkuke, (The deep place, take me)

Mme haanthate, (My mother does not love me)

Keratwa ke-malome. (I am loved by my maternal uncle).

All children demand love of their mothers. Where a mother does not show it, the child feels very unhappy. But love between a nephew or a niece and the maternal uncle is seldom lacking. There are various reasons for this. When a child picks up a lost article it is bound by custom to take it to its maternal

³⁴⁾ Gomme, Vol. II, 1898, p. 475.

³⁵⁾ Nyembezi, 1964, p. 24.

uncle, who, after receiving it will perform the 'hohlatswa mahlo'(the cleansing of the eyes) ritual. He slaughters a fowl for this child to express the wish that the ancestors assist it to see and pick up more valuable objects. Again when the niece gets married 'malome, moja-dihlooho'(maternal uncle, the eater of the heads) comes over to choose the cattle he wants from the 'bohadi'(bride-price). Most of the child's ailments have to be attended to by the maternal uncle. The word for a deep place in the river is in full 'setebetete' and it comes from 'hoteba'(to be deep); but 'tebetete' means mire or mud. The latter is of ideophonic origin, with 'tebe' referring to the sinking of the foot as it presses heavily in the mire. The word 'nkuke' serves as a reminder that '-nka' and '-kuka' mean 'to take'. This solves a difficult problem where, in the imperative $n + nka$ would have to be 'nnke'(from ngngke). In such cases, however, the alveolar nasal n-(as in ntja) and the homorganic ng-(as in nkgo) are spelt alike, although they are formed at different places in the mouth.

(2) Mmankokosane.

6.3 The game is played by the youngsters when the first drops of rain start falling, i.e., while it drizzles. Such first rain-drops are called 'mathe aditshintshi'(the spittle of the house-flies). The children run outside and jump about rhythmically saying these words:

Mma-nkokosane, (Mother who can make us grow tall)

Pula eana, (The rain is falling)

Retlahola neneng?(When shall we grow taller?)

Ha kgwedi ehlaha. (When the moon rises).

There are three important points raised by this rain song. The children are addressing themselves to a fictitious person who is believed by them to be capable of increasing their height.

Unlike the children of today who know about God, the Father, the traditional Mosotho child addressed this 'being' as Mma-, 'a mother' because it was the mothers who looked after the children. Another thing is the association of rain with physical growth. The answer to the children's question is that they would grow when the moon rises. What effect has the moon on 'hōkokosa'(to lift up) or the increasing of height? Today we believe that the moon has the attracting or pulling up effect on the water of the sea. How could the children in those days know this? This adds to the importance of the children's games as a 'storage' of the traditional customs, beliefs, history and, above all, the language of the Basotho. In the same way as the vegetation thrives after the rains, the children also expect it to have the same effect on them. The Basotho say, of a small child 'Osale-metsi'(It is still wet).

(3)Senthee.

6.4. This is a game of testing the strength. The children stand in a 'sakana-lankope'(complete circle) formation and one of them stands in the centre(mpeng yalesaka). Those in the circle hold their hands together(hotshwarana ka-matsoho) to prevent the one in the centre from escaping. He shouts a 'nominy' and they reply challengingly in a chorus:

A. Senthee! (Give way)

B. One-okene lekae?(Where did you enter?)

He throws his weight on any pair of hands; and if they lose their grip, he escapes. The one who chases and catches him takes his place in the centre. He now joins the circle. Very often the one who wishes to go into the ring deliberately allows the grip to break and quickly catches the leader.

6.5 Some vocabulary relevant to this game:

- (i)hore thee! : to give way or to go away for a while,
- (ii)hothetseha: to push oneself aside, to give way,
- (iii)hokopa : to embrace, to surround, to manage a problem,
- (iv)hokopana:to embrace each other, to meet, to unite; hence
'Kopano ke-matla(Unity is strength),
- (v)hotshwarana ka-matsoho:to hold hands, to help each other,
but also 'to fight',
- (vi)hotshwarana ka-pelo: to hold each other by heart, i.e.
to owe one a grudge,
- (vii)hotshwarana ka-dipuo : to incriminate each other from
the words spoken,
- (viii)hotshwarana ka-hlooho : to delay an adverse action by
tricks,
- (ix)hotshwarana ka-leoto : to impede, to cheat.

The didactic value of this game is to teach the children at an early age that if they co-operate they will not fail and fall. Once they allow an opportunity to escape, they stand the chance of losing it for ever or it will need an additional effort to chase and recapture it.

(4)Lesokwana.

6.6 This is a stick used for stirring food in the cooking pot, etc. After use it is scraped off and kept clean in the 'leballo la-seotlwana'(the cross-wise reeds of the reed enclosure).Originally this game was played by women but nowadays young women and little girls also play it. This game is supposed to bring rain. These females get up very early at dawn and invade a neighbouring village for the purpose of surreptitiously snatching the 'lesokwana' and take it to their village. All along the way the leave 'mekgahlelo'(relay groups) who would help to convey this 'lesokwana' speedily to their village. They preferred to

snatch the one from the chief's house. If the 'theft' had not been noticed, the invaders would lift this 'lesokwana' high so that it could be seen. Then the owners of the village would sound an alarm(hohlaba mokgosi). The invaders may 'hide their trails(hopata mehlala) by lift~~up~~ an ordinaryreed to mislead the chasers. The chase itself starts outside(ka-thoko) the village with a dialogue:

A. Lempeile? (Have you placed me? i.e. Get set)

B. Ee. (Yes)

A. Hantlentle? (Very well?)

B. Ee. (Yes)

A. Ka-makgethe? (With great care?)

B. Ee. (Yes)

A. Ha ketloha moo letlantshwara?

(When I start running from here will you be able to catch me?)

B. Ee. (Yes)

A. Feela leseke-lasiya mokona wakgoho!

(Only you must not leave behind the fowl's excrement)

B. Ee. (Yes)

A. Iu! (Run!)

The swear word referring to 'poultry manure' is meant to serve as a 'nominy', an offensive remark that sparks off a clash. The B.-lines represent the choral answer to the leader's questions. They now run away in a 'filemohlaka'(zigzag) formation until they come close to their village. If the owners of the 'lesokwana' have given up the pursuit, these captors now arrange a 'triumphant entry' into their own village. They pluck any green vegetation, including grass and weave ropes(dithapo) and wreaths(dikgare) to wear round their heads, necks and waists. They arrive singing a song with words like these:

Modimo, akoutlwe rearapela,
(God, please hear we are praying)

Mmaakane! hoilwe kae,
(Oh, where have the people gone)

Hosakeng-hokgutlwa retlabonwa?
(Where they never come back to see us?)

Bonkgono ballela matlala,
(Our grandmothers are crying for meat pieces)

Kapa baabona jwang bashwele?
(Or how do they see them being dead?)

Baabona ka-paka tsamajwe.
(They see them through the stone openings)

Beng badikgomo bantse-balela,
(The owners of the cattle keep on crying)

Bare tsabona diatswallwa neng tsona,
(They say when will birth be given for theirs)

Ditswala, diata, dintshetsa marole pele?
(Give birth, multiply, and increase the number of calves?)³⁶⁾

The contents of this song are revealing as far as the cultural life of the Basotho is concerned. They believed in a 'god' or the gods(ancestors) who have departed from them and no longer visit the living. Their anger is demonstrated by the drought they sent to them, because they no longer make offerings to them. This song also refers to barren women who, after the payment of so many cattle as bride-price, they fail to give birth to children. It was customary for barren women to join the 'lesokwana' game, in the hope that their 'sekodi'(stigma) would be cleansed. The absence of rain was also attributed to them. Stones were heaped on to the graves to make sure that wild animals do not dig out and eat the corpses. The captured lesokwana is then taken to their chief's home.

³⁶⁾ Sekese, 1944, par.36, p.26.

6.7 There are some dramatic games which have not been dealt with here because of their insignificance in the language and its literature. From the foregoing it is now clearer that Davies³⁷⁾ was correct in asserting that 'There is no strict difference between what constitutes an action and what a singing game, but there is a tendency to find that the action is subordinate to the song in the action song, and the singing to the game in the singing games'. For instance, in the game Kotje the players either balance on their backs as levers or balance on a long pole levered by a fork of a tree trunk, and they sing:

Kootje.....kotjelle..... kotje!

These words are of ideophonic origin. At the first 'kootje' the opponent is allowed to weigh heavier on his side, that is the pole on his side nearly touches the ground. At 'kotjelle' the one who was 'in the air' now goes down, and so on. That is the significance of these meaningless words, they go with rhythmical up and down movement of the pole.

³⁷⁾ Davies, 1951, p.129.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

DOMESTIC GAMES.

7.1 They are called Domestic Games for want of a better term. These are indoor or fireside games. These are the games which these children have learnt from either the other children or from their parents - and, as far as I am aware, not from a written source. They served a useful purpose as pastimes before the family retired to bed, or they kept the children engaged when the weather outside were inclement.

(1) Majantja.

7.2 The title of this games means the 'dog-eaters'. A player holds his opponent's hand just above the wrist. The owner of the hand must allow it to relax and hang limply. The holder starts calling out the names of edible and inedible items of food and animals. If the hand-owner does not partake of them, he folds his hand away; but if he does, he allows his hand to remain open. The aim is to shout the name so suddenly and unexpectedly that the owner of the hand is unable to decide on what to do:

Maja-kgomo ³	(The eater of the cow)
Maja-ntja ³	(Dog-eater)
Maja-nku ³	(Sheep-eater)
Maja-podi ³	(Goat-eater)
Maja-tweba ³	(Mouse-eater), etc.

If the hand-owner still has his hand clasped when an inedible animal is mentioned, the the hand-shaker has won that round. The crux of this game is to react suddenly on hearing the name of an animal. This name is called out thrice. (Three seems to be a magic number.) Although the Basotho are hippophagous they regard it as disgraceful to eat a dog. In this game the 'dog'

really represents the foodstuffs which were 'taboo' to the Basotho in general and to the children of a certain age group and sex in particular, for example, girls were not allowed to eat eggs and tripe for fear of loss of marriageability. It was, therefore, necessary for the children to know what they were allowed to eat. While this game was being demonstrated a girl who admitted to be a dog-eater blushed.

7.3 The archaic form of the noun ntja(dog) is 'mpja' or 'mptja'. There are many S.Sotho expressions involving this noun:

- (i) ntja : a thief, or a child born after the one who died in infancy; also 'moselantja'(dog's tail),
- (ii) mantja : newcomers or despised people,
- (iii) batho bantja : poor people,
- (iv) motho warantja : a common, unimportant man,
- (v) ntja enyele : the dog has had bowel motions, that is, one has suffered a defeat,
- (vi) hotswa ntjeng : to come out of the dog, that is, to undress in order to do the work,
- (vii) nyewe ebohotswe ke-ntja : the case has been pushed out of the courts for lack of tangible evidence.

(2) Tsipa-kwae.

7.4 The title means 'one who pinches the snuff', that is a nickname for aged people. This game is played by two or three children. The leader pinches the outside of the opponent's hand, the opponent pinches the other hand of the leader, and the leader pinches the other hand of the opponent. This means that the leader pinches two places while the opponent pinches only one - that is the trick! While still pinching thus, they both sing:

Tsipa kwae! (Pinch the snuff)

Qhala kwae! (Scatter the snuff).

While they do so, the hands are moved up and down rhythmically. In so doing the pinching nail often peels off the epidermis. For the leader it will be on only one hand, whereas for the opponent it will be on both hands.

7.5 The aged among the Basotho are notorious amongst the young children because they punish them by pinching. Very often it is painful because they no longer apply manicure treatment to their hands. This is ridiculed in this game. Vocabulary:

- (i)kwae : tobacco, and also a goat slaughtered for the women who bring the bride to her husband's home,
- (ii)kooma: a snuff-box, and also a 'Hlonepha' name for the the male genitals,
- (iii)haho-kwae koomeng : there is no snuff in the snuff-box, that is, although a man looks physically strong he is, in fact, weak and a coward,
- (iv)tsipa-sehole : the pincher of the cripple or the deformed person, that is, a person who never goes to a 'pitso'(meeting called by the chief). The belief here is that if one pinches a deformed person, his traits fall upon one, and he can, therefore, not walk to the 'pitso' too.

(3)Kwidi.

7.6 Kwidi is a kind of aquatic bloodsucking worm like a leech. When the children swim or wade in the water and at the marshy places, it clings on to their bodies and sucks their blood very painfully. If a boy sits down so carelessly that his private parts are visible, this tune is sung:

Katholla ka-kwidi mohlakeng,
(I have discovered the leech's nest among the reeds)

E-mahe amabedi, mohlakeng.
(It has two eggs among the reeds).

The song goes on, and every child may join, until the culprit realizes his carelessness and sits up shamefully.

7.7 The sarcastic intention of this tune hurts deeply because at a certain age in its development a child is expected to hide his private parts, and this is one way of correcting such carelessness. The adults do not sing the tune but merely say to the culprit : Dula hantle! (Sit properly). The 'worm' and its 'two eggs' represent these parts. Another thing, the children, especially the boys, spent their time in the open hunting for the nests of the birds, but they never find(hotholla) the 'nest' of their enemy, the leech. So, in the same way as the leech hides its eggs, a boy must hide his private parts. The repetition of the word 'mohlakeng' is not only meant to rhyme but also to emphasize the place where this is happening, that is between the legs which are alluded to by the 'reeds'.

(4)Yaphintseng.

7.8 It is a common occurrence for the children to pass foul air from the bowels while they are sitting round the fire. This is abominable in a Basotho society. But the culprit never confesses and several methods have to be used to trace him:

Yaphintseng,	(The one who has passed foul air)
Habo hohlabilwe podi,	(A goat has been killed at his home)
E-naka lekgopo,	(With a crooked horn)
Tshintshi theoha thabeng	(Housefly come down the mountain)
Omolomele kwana!	(And bite him off/away).

While one of the children is singing this detective tune he points at one child at every syllable. The one who will be pointed last is made to carry the blame, whether he is the culprit or not. The type of food eaten at his home is also ridiculed by referring to 'the crooked-horned goat'. The act is exaggerated when the housefly, which feeds on the actual stools, is invited to come down the mountain to come and disturb him in the act. The mountain is the home of all fearsome things as far as the children are concerned.

7.9 The relative construction 'yaphintseng' has been used without the antecedent noun for the sake of brevity. The indefinite 'ho-' is a very important 'Hlonepha' particle used by Basotho children, for example, 'hothwe kerobale' (it is said I should sleep) is a reference to a senior member of the family. Otherwise the child would say 'ore kerobale' (he says I should sleep). 'Omolomele kwana!' (The housefly is asked to bite him away from the speaker). The applied extension -el- stands for that. The opposite of the locative 'kwana' (away from the speaker) is 'kwano' (towards the speaker).

(5) Hopheha kgobe.

7.10 This means to cook the maize grain. It is a concentration game where two children look fixedly at each other for a long time without winking (hopanya). The one who winks is the loser. One says: Ha rephehe kgobe (Let us cook the grain). If the opponent winks, one shouts : Ditjhele! (They are burnt out) or
Opantse! (You have winked).

It is unusual to refer to many grains that are being cooked as 'kgobe', and not 'dikgobe'. This does not compare with, for example : Kgobe dibutswitse (The grains are well-cooked, that is, someone has stopped crying). The analogy between the 'grain' that

is being cooked in water and the 'eye-ball' floating in tears stands out very clearly here. It cannot be claimed that one has to look fixedly at the grain cooking in the pot. But the grains took too long to become well-cooked and this demanded constant addition of fuel to the fire and water into the pot. The verb 'hobutswa' also means 'to ripen', so the Basotho concept of both processes is 'the softening of food items so that they are ready to be eaten'. But as this 'softening' has to go up to a certain degree, it has to be kept under strict surveillance. The alternative of '-butswitse' is '-budule' which has fallen into disuse. The idiomatic expression 'hoja kgobe ka-lemao' (to eat a grain by means of a needle) means 'to lead an easy life'. This expression also alludes to the eating habits of the well-to-do Basotho of old. They had enough time to pick the grains one by one when they ate. So the use of a fork and a knife at meals is not completely unknown to them. The verb '-panya' (to wink) could be compared with '-fanya' (to see indistinctly). Both are of ideophonic origin. Of a flickering lamp it is said: 'Lebone leapanya-panya'. The smell of burning food is called 'sehau' against 'seputa', the smell of rotten food.

(6) Malepa.

7.11 These were 'puzzles' which tested the children's sense of observation. For these puzzles they used a string made of 'lodi' (rush), 'lesika' (sinew), and so on. This string (kgwele) had to be twisted or spun (hoohla). The twisting of a string is strictly a women's work. They roll the threads on their thighs, adding some water or spittle to make it roll on speedily. Then the string is tied and held with the outstretched four fingers of each hand while the thumbs are manipulating the string into formations such as 'maotwana adikgoho' (the feet of the hens), 'mala anku' (the intestines of the sheep), etc.

7.12 In S.Sotho there are two possible things which could happen when the vowels o and e are juxtaposed, namely that they merge into 'we' (vowel o becomes a semi-vowel w) or the vowel e is elided altogether. These changes are discernable in alternating forms such as :

kgwele / kgole (a string),

lengwele / lengole (a knee),

lerwele / lerole (dust or dust storm), etc.

This art of seeing resemblances of objects in these string-formations went further into the heavenly bodies such as the moon, the stars and the clouds, hence 'bolepi'(astronomy) and 'molepi'(an astronomer). The children I approached told me that the cumulus clouds resembled 'boya banku'(sheep wool), cirrus the hair of an old man(who was believed to have died on that day), and also the images of a dog chasing a hare, a man riding on a horse, a dassie lying down, etc.

(7)Dilotho.

7.13 These are riddles. They do not only test the children's powers of observation but also their mental faculties. It is always very interesting to note the close affinity of form (resemblance) between the actual object and the riddle itself. The following method of delivery was found among all those contacted:

A.Kaolotha. (I puzzled you)

B. Ka'ng? (With what, i.e. how?)

A. Ka-majwana-mabedi, mabetsa-hole.

(With two little stones which can be thrown far away)

B. Mahlo. (The eyes).

If B cannot solve the riddle, he presents his riddle as a counter:

B. Kasereka. (I have bought it)

A. Ka'ng? (With what?)

B. Letsa leteetsweng hare ke-methoto.

(A lake which is surrounded by the sedges)

A. Leihlo. (The eye).

7.14 The sentences used in these riddles are in the abbreviated narrative tense. Instead of 'Keile-kaolotha'(I did puzzle you), we have only 'Kaolotha'. To illustrate that brevity is the rule in these constructions, the answers are also given in one word, thus 'mahlo' or 'leihlo'. Now the clues have to be considered against the correct answers. 'The two stones that can be thrown far away' : the eyes are comparatively small to the other organs of the body, they are two in number, but it needs thinking to discover that they could 'be thrown far away'(that is, see far away). In S.Sotho the expression 'hoakgela mahlo dithabeng', for example, can be used although it literally means 'to throw the eyes into the mountains', that is, 'to look at the mountains'. Another clue is 'the lake which is surrounded by the sedges': the sedges represent the eye-lashes, but to associate the eye-ball with the lake is a bit far-fetched. Fortunately the sedge grows near the water(of the lake) and the watery surface of the eye resembles that of the lake. Two literary forms are discernable in the construction 'majwana-mabedi, mabetsa-hole': there is alliteration of the consonant 'm', and parallelism or the balancing of the two parts majwana-mabedi and mabetsa-hole. These are some of the distinguishing features of the S.Sotho riddles and proverbs. The verb '-betsa' has other meanings:

- (i) hobetsa morabaraba : to play the morabaraba game,
- (ii) hobetsa moromuwa : to send out a messenger,
- (iii) hobetsa moshanyana : to beat a boy,
- (iv) madi aipetsa : blood spurted out on its own,
- (v) pere yaipetsa ka-pele ;: the horse threw itself in front,
that is, it won the race.

7.15 Most of the children wanted me to spend much time at this game of riddles. Some of the traditional riddles were revolving:

(1)Thele! thele! ka-dilomo. (Fall down, fall down the precipices). This refers to the 'flour' as it falls down the mill-stone while a woman is grinding it. A hard stone(lelwala) is chiselled(betlwa) into a concave form, and on it the grain was crushed(sila) with another oblong stone big enough to be held with both hands. At the tip of the mill-stone a grinding mat (sethebe) was spread out to collect the falling flour that is being pushed off by the 'tshilo'(the grinding stone).

(2)Lehadima, leredi, lepota motse. (The lightning, the glittering thing that goes round the village). The answer to this one is the 'calf'. It is the Basotho custom to keep the calves at home while their mothers graze in the veld. Small boys herd them around the village. This is where they run around with their glittering hides that flash like the lightning. Although S. Sotho is an alliterative language, the alliteration of le in this riddle is obvious. Although 'lehadima' is derived from the verb '-hadima'(to flash) it does not end in -i like most agentive nouns like 'leredi'(from horella). The Basotho bred cattle.

(3)Maqheku aqabane ka-lehaheng. (The old men are quarrelling in the cave). This refers to 'roasted maize grain'. The heat inside the pot makes them decrepitate, and this is called quarrelling. But why are they left in the cave? It is alleged that in the emergency during the Difaqane (Wars of Devastation), the able-bodied people left the aged, the infirm and the blind in the caves when the enemy approached. The Basotho did take shelter in the caves although they built themselves houses. The verb '-qabana' is a 'Hlonepha' equivalent of '-lwana'(fight).

(4) Hei, tloo lekwano. (Hey, come here too). The answer is the 'bush of berries' (monokotshwai). A passerby is often attracted by the ripe berries. So it is suggested that he comes to pick the berries because they 'called' him. Literally the interjectives are not translatable yet they are meaningful in that they can only be used in definite contexts. If replaced by 'Jo!' (an interjective of surprise) the meaning of the following words will be different.: 'Jo, tloo lekwano' means 'you cannot go your way without coming here too'. The use of the conjunctive 'le-' (together with, also, too) is common in S. Sotho:

Ntate lemme (Father and mother),

Ntate leyena oya Lesotho (Father is also going to Lesotho),

Ntate leyena baaja (Father and he are eating).

The Basotho also lived on the wild berries and herbs (moroho).

(5) Banna basabeeng melamu faatshe. (Men who do not put down their sticks.) These 'men' are the dogs. They always have their tails with them, pointing up. The analogy here is between the men with sticks and the dogs with tails. But their use is not the same. However, it is clear that the Basotho used the sticks when they travelled for various reasons, for example, to fight, to feel the depth of the water before crossing, to carry their luggage, to support themselves, etc. The verb -bea (place, put) is often confused with -beha (to report the news of death). This misuse of -h- as a sort of hiatus between juxtaposed vowels has resulted into some corrupted forms such as : -dia (for diha : to raze to the ground), -buwa (for -bua : to speak), -suha (for -sua : to make supple), etc.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

CHANCE GAMES.

8.1 These are games in which guessing is the principal feature, and most of them have prescribed forms of penalties and/or punishments inflicted for the breach of the rules. But the penalties are so negligible and unsevere that the players accept them with a smile, and, above all, they are accepted as justified. But in some of these games the emphasis is laid on their being of undesigned and unpredictable occurrence.

(1) Phupe.

8.2 'This noun derived from the verb '-fupa'(to be full or pregnant of) means 'a hidden object'. A small object, usually a stone or 'kgobe'(maize grain) is hidden in one of the clenched hands and the opponent is called upon to guess where. When the object is being hidden the two hands are kept at the back so that the opponent may not see. Now when they are brought to the front, the 'hider' tries by all means to mislead the 'guesser'. He may push the wrong hand forward with the words:

Nka, keofe! (Take, let me give you).

He may grasp the object so firmly that the 'searcher' may think the object is not in that particular hand but in the other which looks bigger. So the 'searcher' feels the wrists:

Ere keutlwe pele.(Let me feel first)

Thereafter the 'hider' challenges him to make his choice:

E-ka-ho-lefe? (In which one is it?)

The 'searcher' holds one of the hands and says:

Mphe ka-ho-lena. (Give me inside this one).

This hand is then opened. If it is not there, the other one is also opened to show that the object is, in fact, in it. The other

method is faster and the decision has to be taken in a split second. Each player holds a short stick with both hands while they stand face to face, like the boxers who shake hands before the fight starts. The idea is to retain the stick in only one hand when a 'nominy' is shouted. The opponent of 'Lethula' is 'Lefape', so the two players must first choose one of these names. Lethula wins when the sticks are in the directly opposite hands, that is, the right hand of Lethula against the left hand of Lefape. Lefape wins when the sticks are in the diagonally opposite hands, that is, the left hand of Lefape against the right one of Lethula. It has to be noted that Lethula is derived from the verb '-thula' (to collide, bump into) and Lefape from '-fapana' (to place across, alternate). The procedure followed is thus:

Lai! Tseke! (A flash of lightning)

Then the players quickly hold the stick in one hand, then follows the interjective reply from the winner:

Thuu! (a bumping noise).

Alternatively, they give each other a chance to shout alone:

Ke-Lefape (I am your antagonist)

If the sticks are in his favour, he shouts further:

Bjwatla! (A cracking noise).

A champion is the player who beats all the opponents in a row.

8.3 The verbal stems -fupa and -phupa are interchangeable and related: holding in the mouth and in the hand respectively.

Phupu means a grave (containing a corpse) or the month of July (when the buds are swollen, unopened). The name Lethula comes from the ideophone 'thuu' (a crushing sound). But the ideophone 'bjwatla' or 'bjatla' gives a clattering sound. Verbs derived

from the ideophones make an interesting study, moreso that Doke and Mofokeng³⁸) refer to only three suffixes used for this purpose. This study notes^{that} at least five suffixes or extensions which could be added to ideophonic radicals to form verbs:

- (1)-h- (intransitive): -apoha(disperse), -refoha/-ropoha/foqoha (stand/rise up suddenly), -qethoha(lie on the back).
- (2)-l-(transitive): -apola(remove the cover), -qethola(capsize), -fothola(eradicate), -petsola(split open).
- (3)-ts-(causative): -heletsa(raze to the ground), -kopetsa (cause to close), -tlwatlwatsa(cause to produce a frying sound), -laitsa(to glitter).
- (4)-m-(stative) : -putlama(fall down with a thud), -laima(shine), -phatshima(glitter), -qhoma(jump up).
- (5)-y-(causative): -nyekenya(stab repeatedly or badly), -thunya (shoot, cause the bud to open), -hlasinya(cause to wake up), -phekgenya(give a hard kick).

With the colour ideophone the extension -fala is used :

- (6)-fala(inchoative): -tlerefala(become red), -pudufala(become grey), -sehlefala(become yellow).

8.4 Semantically the locative ka- is not optional as generally believed. The following will illustrate:

Tshintshi e-pitseng : The housefly is on the pot/ on top of the pot/ on the side of the pot/ at the pot, but

Tshintshi e-ka-pitseng: The housefly is inside the pot.

Even idiomatically there is a difference:

Hokena ka-tlung (To enter(inside) the house, but

Hokena tlung(To be in labour of a woman).

³⁸) Doke & Mofokeng, 1957, par. 643, p. 338.

8.5 There is a general confusion about ere in the written language:

Ere keutlwe : This ere is the imperative form of the verb -re(say). As a monosyllabic stem it has to be preceded by e- if the final vowel cannot be doubled(into -ree).

Bua ere haoqeta odule faatshe : Here this ere is a conjunctive, and the sentence means 'Speak and when (it happens that) you finish, sit down'. Therefore ere can be translated into 'it happens that'. There is a whole series of these ere forms which differ according to tense, for example, eitse, etlare, yare, eyere, ekare, esere, enore, entore, etc.

(2)Mekopu.

8.6 A fat, lazy child is called a 'mokopu'(a pumpkin), and their bodily shape makes them unpopular when play teams are chosen. But in this game they are favoured, not because of their strength, but because of their weight. This game is a test of strength. Two of the eldest children lead. They decide on the offers they are going to make to the rest of the children to win them into their respective teams. For example, one offers 'nama yanku'(mutton) and the other 'nama yakgoho'(chicken). The two leaders stand together holding hands(hotshwarana kamatsoho). The other children form a long chain(also holding hands) and come along running and singing a tune. As they pass between the two leaders, they lower their hands to hold back the last child in the long train. This child faces one leader at a time to hear the offer that is being made:

Question: Ha ele-nama yanku, ele-yakgomo, orata efe?

(if it is mutton and beef, which one do you prefer?)

Answer: Yanku.(Mutton)

Questioner:(if he offered it)Fetela ka-mor'aka.

(Pass to my back)

This goes on with the leaders taking turns. When all the children have made their choices, the two leaders hold hands firmly and their followers hold on to their waists and so on amongst themselves. Now they start pulling as in a 'tug o'war'. The weaker side is usually harrassed, and they are called the pumpkins when they fall down.

8.7 The full form of 'ka-mor'aka' is 'ka-morao waka'. Where the apostrophe has been used to indicate where letters had been elided this was written down as 'ka-mora'ka'. This matter has to be decided now. In similar constructions only the final vowel of the possessee and the consonant of the PC were omitted:

ka-pele yaka	=	ka-pel'aka (in front of me),
ka-hare habona	=	ka-har'abona (amongst them),
ka-hodimo hantlo	=	ka-hodim'antlo (on top of the house),
ka-tlase yaka	=	ka-tlas'aka (under me),
ngwana waka	=	ngwan'aka (my child), etc

From the foregoing the problem has not been fully solved because morao has two final vowels; that makes it:

ka-morao waka = ka-moraa'aka.

If the final form should be ka-moraka, which of the two a's has been omitted? The answer is: Not that of -aka. Then why must both -a and -o of morao be omitted? The answer is: The answer is: The vowel o and w are identical and where they are juxtaposed, they merge into one, namely, o; hence spellings such as hloho for hlooho (head), nyoko for nyooko (bile), etc. In that case the -a- of morao will be ommissible, hence:

ka-morao waka = ka-mor'aka (behind me).

Compare now with:

ngoana oaka = ngwana waka = ngwan'aka (my child).

(3) Holaola.

8.8 While the adults use the 'ditaola'(divining bones), the children have devised at least three important methods of divining; often used to find out the direction which the lost animals have taken. These three are 'holaola'(to divine) by:

- (i) mathe(spittle),
- (ii) konikoni(the insect pupa) and
- (iii) makorokoro(a plant leaf or blade).

(i) Mathe.

The child spits into the hold of the palm and he strikes this spittle with the forefinger. The direction to which most of the spittle will be splashed is taken as the direction that has been taken by the lost animals. It is all guess work.

(ii) Konikoni.

The golden brown pupa of, for example, the maize stalk borer is used for this purpose. It is held up-side-down and asked:

Bokone ke-kae? (Which direction is Bokone?)

Lesotho ke-kae?(Which direction is Lesotho?)

While these questions are asked the sharp point of the pupa's abdomen keeps on turning and pointing to certain directions. The children enjoy this and take turns to ask their questions.

(iii) Makorokoro.

From Lesotho I brought this plant which was identified by the Bolus Herbarium of U.C.T. as 'Geranium ornithopodum'. When it ripens in the sun it splits into many threads which resemble the toes of a bird or the legs of a spider called 'letsatsi' (a hunting spider). Herdboys pluck this plant when their animals are lost, especially on a hot day while they rest or sleep in the shade, and ask it their whereabouts. Because of the heat the blade of the plant recoils to the side where they have gone.

This beautiful alliterative melody goes like this:

Makorokoro, (Makorokoro)
 Kgomo dikae? (Where are the cows?)
 Dika-sakeng. (They are in the kraal)
 Tsam'odilata, (Go to fetch them)
 Retl'odihama. (So that we milk them)

Refrain: I...tshothe, (Coil yourself)

Ob'oitshothe (And coil yourself again)

The first five lines are repeated by the one who is holding the leaf; all others may join him at the refrain.

8.9 The name 'koni-koni' is a pet name derived from 'Bokone' (the country of the Nguni-people), that is, the south. From childhood the Basotho children knew of the cruel deeds of the Nguni-people and they loved to play 'Konikoni' because this funny insect showed them the direction from which their enemies would emerge. To ask it where Lesotho was while they were in Lesotho was merely to make sure that this insect was not an automaton. The prefix bo- is commonly used to refer to places and directions, for example, Bopedi(country of Bapedi), Borwa (country of Barwa), botjhabela(east, the sun from which the sun rises), bophirima(west, the side on which the sun sets), etc. The metre in the rhyme 'Makorokoro' is well-defined as 5.5.5.5.5. - 3.4., with -ng as a separate syllable. Several words have been telescoped to make them suit the rhythm:

Tsam'odilata (from Tsamaya hodilata;Go to fetch them),
 Retl'odihama (from Rettle hodihamam:We should come to milk them),
 Ob'oitshothe (from Obe-oitshothe:And even coil yourself).

In S.Sotho tsam'o(tsamaya ho-) is a common way of giving orders, for example, Tsam'obitsa ntatao(Go to call your father). The tangible alliteration of -k- cannot be overlooked. The dialogue is unique and the refrain well-demarcated for effect.

CHAPTER NINE.

CULTURAL GAMES.

9.1 It is impossible to classify these traditional games of the Basotho children into water-tight, clearly-defined categories. The culture of a people involves the whole pattern of their upbringing, history, customs, beliefs, practices, etc. The importance of these games becomes more pronounced now that the Bantu as a whole have been permanently drawn into the orbit of the civilization of the West. In the remote rural areas the conflict between the traditional and the new culture is still observable. There are certain innovations which the Basotho children had little option but to accept into their games. In this study, however, such adulterated games have either been cut down to the minimum or excluded altogether, where possible. The early religious missionaries brought many changes in the social set-up and the communal life of the Basotho in general.

(1) Hokoeetsa.

9.2 In the distribution of labour it is the little girls' lot 'to rock the baby to sleep'(hokoeetsa). She has to carry it on her back(hopepa) with a supple skin called 'thari'. This is done while the mother is busy with her other household chores. Probably the little girl has to do this because her back is not as wide as her mother's which is said to be the cause of rickets (dihoro) in the legs of the infants. By custom girls have to be under the direct tuition of the mother while the father teaches the boys. Girls have learnt to love this, and, in the absence of their parents they play a game of 'mantlwantlwane'(pseudo-homes) where they refer to one another as Mma-Nnyeo(Mother of So-and-So) or just basadi(women). They have beautiful melodies for lulling the baby:

(i)Eu, eu, eu! (I am calling you out)
Wena, mosadi towe!(You, the woman over there)
Oyang masimong, (Who is going to the fields)
Ere Mme ka-moo, (Say to my mother that side)
Ngwana oalla, (The child is crying)
Oalla, oathola. (It cries and keeps quiet.)

Refrain: Eitse keetela, Mpharane,
(When I was on a visit to Mpharane)
Ngwan'amme, (My mother's child)
Kafumana ngwan'amokgotso akula,
(I found my friend's child ill)
Ngwan'amme, (My mother's child)
Katswela ka-ntle, kaseka meokgo,
(I went outside to shed my tears)
Ngwan'amme. (My mother's child)

In short, the content of this lullaby is that this little nanny sees a woman going to the lands and she gives her a message, to her own mother who is already there, that the baby is crying. Then she remembers an occasion when she had gone to visit her friend at Mpharane. She found her child seriously ill and she went outside the house to weep. The phrase 'ngwan'amme' is used here to punctuate the story about the visit to Mpharane, and also as reference to the child who is being 'rocked to sleep'. It is important to note that the interjective 'towe' has a plural form 'ting', hence 'mosadi towe' but 'basadi ting'. In S. Sotho 'mokgotso' does not only refer to a 'friend' but also to the 'parents-in-law'. 'Bokgotso' is the relationship between the two families that have intermarried. A pet name which also serves as a form of address is 'kgotso'. 'Kgotso' means 'peace', therefore one expects one's daughter to live in peace at her new home with her in-laws. The verb 'hokgotso' (to live peacefully) is seldom used, yet it is effective.

(ii) This lullaby is sung by one person in different voices (hers and her mother's):

Mme, moshanyana oalela, (Mother, the little boy is crying)

Mokgutsise. (Make him keep quiet)

Ohana hokgutsa, (He refuses to keep quiet)

Mokgutsise, (Make him keep quiet)

Refrain: Onke thari, (You should take a carrying-skin)

Omopepe; (And carry him on your back)

Kesapheile motoho (I am still cooking watery porridge.)

When the mother is given a report that her little boy is crying she repeatedly tells the little daughter to carry him on her back because she is still cooking food for him. The first four lines comprise the dialogue. As the problem remains unsolved, the mother suggests what should be done in the refrain. This is a common feature of these lullabies. The verb stem '-lela' is the full form of '-lla' (cry). The elision of the vowel -e- in such construction is a characteristic feature of S. Sotho:

-sala + -ela = salela = salla (remain behind for),

-qela + -ela = qelela = qella (ask something for), etc.

For brevity '-phehile' has been given as '-pheile' in the song.

(iii) Otlapepuwa ke-mang, ngwan'amme,

(By whom will he be picked-a-back)

Ha mmae aile masimong, ngwan'amme,

(When his/her mother has gone to the fields)

Ntatae aile makgoweng, ngwan'amme,

(His/her father has gone to work)

Ha mmae atimana rotswana sakgohe,

(When his/her mother is stinchy with a leg of chicken)

Ntatae atimana ka-sekesepense,

(His/her father is stinchy with a sixpence)

E....i, ei, e....i, ngwan'amme.

(I am calling you, mother's child).

This lullaby was rendered by an aged grandmother of this baby, hence the free use of 'mmae' and 'ntatae'. A Mosotho girl would not address an adult person that way. The two meanings of 'mme' are clearly illustrated here, namely, 'my mother' and 'a mother'. The phrase 'ngwan'amme' is again used to punctuate the lullaby. This is a modern lullaby because of the vocabulary used, for example, makgoweng(at the white man's place), 'sekesepanse'(a six-pence coin). These grannies who look after babies have to be given food and some presents, otherwise they refuse to baby-sit.

9.3 These lullabies have revealed certain trends in the cultural life of the Basotho. It is the role of the girls to look after the infants while the mothers are occupied by some other work. In the absence of these little girls some granny(nkgono) was expected to look after her 'ditloholo'(grandchildren). The women-also worked in the fields. The relationship between those who intermarry was highly esteemed. The method of carrying babies is given, that is, on the back with a 'thari!'. Messages were sent around by 'word-of-mouth'(neano-yataba). The favourite dish of the Basotho 'motoho' is also mentioned. It is interesting to see how the amount of 'liquid' affects its name:

bohobe : bread, stiff porridge,

lesheleshele : soft, thick porridge,

motoho : fluid porridge, and

mahleu : watery(sour) porridge.

The Basotho kept poultry. Then comes the period of change. Girls go to school and the grannies become full-time nannies. Men go to work in towns while the women remain tilling the soil. The gifts change form and are, in fact, now forms of payments for the services rendered. A generous housewife was very popular.

(2)Hokgwasa ditadi.

9.4 'To hunt out the field mice' is the favourite game of the herdboys(badisana).The did not eat 'ditweba'(domestic mice) but the field mouse species such as kgwana (with white stripe on the back), lebodi(a field rat), lebokorwana, etc.These were distinguished by the stripes on their backs(mereto), hence the proverbial expression: Ngwan'atadi otsejwa ka-mereto.

(The young of the field mouse are known by stripes).

For this expedition the boys are divided into two groups; those who go to scare the mice and those who waylay them and kill them. The rhyme for scaring them is very simple:

Mmo, mmo, mmo, kgwana wee, mmo!

(You are being called out, field mouse)

This is repeated with stampeding. Then as the mice come running along the 'metjha'(mice tracks) in the grass, they are stabbed with 'ditsenene'(sharp pointed sticks). These 'ditsenene' were made of 'makgate'(branches of the poplar tree). Every hunter had a 'motshwaredi'(a keeper of dead mice). If such a 'caddie' kept the mice of more than one hunter, he used various methods of marking(hotshwaya) them, for example,

hoqephola tsebe : to clip off part of the ear,

homotsula mohatla: to peel off the tail, etc.

The inside organs(di-ka-hare), especially 'malana'(intestines), were taken out so that the meat does not get spoilt before it is roasted(hobesa). All the dead mice were punctured under the chin (seledu) and a teele(grass) string put through them. Some of the rhymes the boys sang for this purpose were so vulgar that it was decided to keep them out of this study. To quote only one of them:

Leader: Kuree....., kuree..... (Get up, get up)

Chorus: Ho.... ho, tadi, (Shout at the filed mouse)

Ho, tadi yakena mosadi ka-tlase,
(Oh, a mouse crept under the woman's skirt)

Yaba yatswa lemarereptjhwane,
(It eventually came out with pieces of membrane)

Marereptjhwane, mathiba-sekgala,
(Membrane meant to prevent pain in the intestines)

Sekgala samohats'amorena.
(The pain of the chief's spouse/wife).

The humour is in the fact that a mouse will run into anything when it is scared. But the sarcasm in its coming out with these 'marereptjhwane' (the type of mucus membrane seen on dung) is very unpleasant, to say the least. But boys are boys and they do anything when they are by themselves. My informant was not prepared to release this 'record'.

9.5 Once more the translation of the interjectives has come to the fore. In 'kgwana wee!' the free translation could be:

'kgwana, you are being called 'out',

'kgwana, have I succeeded in calling your attention',

'kgwana, can you hear my voice',

Let us try another context. If someone calls out Pitso, he can well answer : 'Wee!', meaning 'I hear your voice/ Here am I', etc. Spoonerism is a well-known figure of speech in S. Sotho:

-motsula / -tsomula : to pull or peel off,

-kgoramela / -kgomarela : to cling to, etc.

The caddie's reward is usually 'dithwebo' (hairy pieces of charred skin that has been peeled off before the hunter feasts on mice).

(3) Senyamo.

9.6 This interjective is used as a 'nominy' in this 'choose the one you love' game. It could freely be translated as 'be frank' / 'declare openly' / 'speak without shame', etc. It is played by bigger boys and girls especially when they are by themselves. It goes on like this:

- A. Senyamo! (Whom do you love?)
B. Se-mang? (Whom do you suggest?)
A. Se-Nnyeo? (I suggest So-and-So)
B. Seboko. (A worm, i.e. I don't love him/her)
A. Se-Mosidi? (I suggest Mosidi)
B. Ka-shwa. (I die for her.)

In this dialogue it is clear that the introductory interjective is not a question but a mere 'nominy' to provoke response. It is followed by an inquiry. Then the names of the possible lovers are mentioned until the one who is being quizzed confesses his or her love in the words 'Ka-shwa' (I died long ago for him/her). But if the suggested person is not the one loved, the answer is 'seboko' (a worm). But the relationship between 'ka-shwa' (being dead) and 'seboko' (a worm) seems to be overlooked. Probably the alliterative nature of S. Sotho has influenced the use of both senyamo and seboko; and the se- now permeates all the lines until 'Ka-shwa' is said. The diminutive form of Nnyeo is Nnyewane. From -nyamo can also be formed -nyamoleha (to do a shameful thing in public). Because of this game both sexes are afforded an opportunity to know who loves who, and this develops into a sort of 'calf-love' relationship. Ostensibly Basotho children were not allowed to choose their marriage partner, but behind the scenes mothers pester their children with suggestive questions and remarks like: If my son was old enough, I would be happy to

have So-and-So's child as my daughter-in-law, and vice versa. To call a prospective lover a 'worm' is an insult as will be revealed in the other games in this study. This is rebuked in the proverb: Motsheha-sofe oaitsheha.

(One who laughs at an albino laughs at him/herself)

9.7 In the Leribe district of Lesotho the girls danced a game known by a similar name. They formed a circle(sakana-lankope) and clapped hands while one of them entered the ring to 'twist' while the following rhyme was sung:

Leader: Se...nyamo!

Chorus: Se-mang?

Leader: Se...nyamo bo!

Chorus: Se- ..mang bo?

Leader: Se-ke-lekopokopo keakoposela(I am a tin,I am trembling)

Ke-metsi aforo,keaforosela(I'm furrow water,I'm flowing)

Ke-Mmamohau,keahausela(I am Mother of Pity,I pity all)

Ha kefihla Peka,keapetetsana(When I reach Peka I'm
squeezed)

The words used here form a lesson in grammar. From the nouns the verbs are derived: lekopokopo : -kopo+s+ela,

mohau : -hau+s+ela,

fōro : -foro+s+ela.

The verbal extensions used are the causative and the applied.

With Peka and -petetsana alliteration is illustrated.

(4)Hokana.

9.8 This game is similar to 'Senyamo' above, but here they physically choose the one they love. Boys stand in a row facing a similar row of girls. They all start singing and clapping hands while one of the boys moves in front of the girls to be picked

and hugged by the girl who loves him:

Precentor: Lemohane..... (You should refuse him/her)

Chorus: : Lemohane, (You should refuse him/her)

Lemohane, (You should refuse him/her)

Lemoswabise. (You should disappoint him/her)

Precentor: Ere ha aswaba....(When he gets disappointed)

Chorus : Ha aswaba, (When he gets disappointed)

Ha aswaba, (When he gets disappointed)

Lemodumele. (You should accept him)

Once a boy has managed to get a partner, the two move on to the end of the boys' row to start a new one of couples. The matter does not end there. A couple must still look out because an unclaimed boy can still make an already coupled girl change her mind and go with him. But this is abhorred. When everybody is coupled, the whole procedure is started afresh with the girls parading in front of the boys. Anyone in the row is allowed to turn his/her back(hofuralla) on the 'hunter' as a sign of not wanting him/her.

9.9 The logical sequence of the key words and actions here is important: 'hohana'(to refuse), 'hoswaba'(to be disappointed) and 'hodumela'(to accept). The punitive suspense is followed by exhilarating acceptance of the proposal. Although this is a game, the players do blush when the person they love turns the back to them. In S.Sotho whenever an OC is used it must precede the verb stem and nothing must come between them:

lemohane and lemodumele.

It is after games like 'hokana' that mothers learn to know the girl or the boy who loves her child. When the time comes for choosing a husband or a wife, then she makes a suitable choice. The myth of Basotho parents choosing marriage partners for their children is not wholly true. The children always confide in their mothers, and her recommendations are generally unopposed. 114/.

(5) Madimo.

9.10 For obvious reasons Basotho children feared cannibals (madimo), yet they have included them in their games. Three good runners are chosen as 'cannibals'. A bigger girl is chosen as the 'mother' and all others (boys and girls) are her 'children'. The mother remains at 'home' (lehaae), a chosen spot, while her 'children' go out to play. Between the playing children and their home the cannibals lie in waiting, they waylay them:

Mother: Bana baka! (My children)
 Children: Mme! (Mother)
 Mother: Tloong haae! (Come home)
 Children: Reatshaba. (We are afraid)
 Mother: Letshabang? (What are you fearing?)
 Children: Madimo. (The cannibals)
 Mother: Haaleje. (Let them eat you).

When the 'mother' shouts the last line, her children run towards her and the cannibals intercept. Anyone who is caught also becomes a cannibal. In the end there are more cannibals than the children. The last child who arrives home safely when all others have been cannibalized is the winner, but his/her victory is less important. What the children enjoy is the frolicking about.

9.11 The word 'banabaka' and some similar ones bring up a big problem whether the possessee and the possessor should be joined together or not:

(a) If 'bana baMasilo' (Masilo's children) should be written down as two words, then 'bana bahae' (his children), 'bana bahao' (your children) and 'bana baka' (my children) must also be written down as two words. But 'rangwane wahao' (your paternal uncle) could be written down as 'rangwan'ao', and 'rangwane wahae' (his/her paternal uncle) as 'rangwan'ae'.

(b) Furthermore the possessives -eso, -eno and -abo give trouble especially when used with ngwana(child) and bana(children), ngwana waheso = ngwana waeso = ngwana weso = ngwan'eso, but bana baheso = bana baeso = bana beso(never banabeso as invariably written down by grammarians). We have to repeat it that banabeso is a wrong construction, and that it does not compare with ngwan'eso above. Surprising that nobody mis-spells lesele lesa(the baby of my home), sefate seso(our tree), etc. In ngwan'eso -a and w- have been omitted after the 'silent h-'has been dropped and the juxtaposed 'ae' have coalesced into -e-. With bana beso the final vowel of the possessee cannot be dropped and the consonant b-of beso(from baeso)can also not be dropped.

9.12 The nominal stem -dimo has a special meaning which can best be revealed in the following nouns derived from it:

Classes 1/2 : modimo/badimo (ancestor/s), ancestor god/s),

1a/2a : Dimo/boDimo (fabulous giant/cannibal),

3/4 : modimo/medimo (gods e.g. of luck, etc),

5/6 : ledimo/madimo (cannibal/s:prefix le- = evil),

5/6 : lehodimo/mahodimo (sky/skies, heaven/s).

The biblical God is 'Modimo', usually spelt with a capital M.

The locative 'hodimo' means 'up, above, on top, etc'. All these derivations throw light on the Basotho beliefs that a god has to be physically huge, that the ancestors live in another place or world(but the location is presumably underground because the graves are in the ground) and that the ancestors still keep an eye on their living oofspring. It is an evil thing to eat human flesh, therefore a cannibal is a ledimo. Parents, especially the mothers,scare the children(when they are naughty) by telling them that they would ask Dimo to come and take them to his cave where he would cook/roast them for his meals.

(6) Seqata-majwana.

9.13 This literally means 'a target of little stones'. This is a game played by the herdboys. It aims at inculcating punctuality and ability to dodge a blow. They usually sit on an elevated place so that their eyes could fall on their charges while they play a game of 'diketo'(already discussed), and also on anybody who could be sent from the 'kgotla'(council place) to come and give them a hiding if the cattle, etc entered the fields and destroyed the crops. According to the Basotho custom any man who comes upon a group of boys may demand a gift from them, and if they have nothing to offer, he may punish them:

The man: Tsirwane yaeshwa, bashemane!(The lark died, boys)

Boys : Haena dithelo. (It has nothing to offer).

The man: Kgwathang! (Bend down)

The man then punishes them to his satisfaction. But in this game of 'seqata-majwana' the herdboys pick up small stones and throw them at the latecomer while they chant:

Seqata-majwana (The one who absorbs the stones)

Hasellelwe, (Nobody cries for him)

Ke-sabadisana. (It is the game of the herdboys.)

The little stones are not thrown hard enough to injure the one who comes late. In spite of this stone-throwing he is bound to dodge the stones until he reaches the 'nqalo'(playground). This can also be done to anybody whom they sent out to prevent the animals from entering the fields. A herdboy is not allowed to report any assaults made on him to his parents in the evening when he gets home. If he does so, his father may continue where his assailants left off, and give him further punishment.

9.14 A game like 'seqata-majwana' and the indiscriminate punishment of boys point towards the Spartan way these children were brought up. If a boy cried because he felt pain the remark that invariably followed was :O-mosadi, olla feela.

(You are a woman, you cry for no reason).

Every group of herdboys had a 'mmampodi' (a chief herdboy) to whom they had to do homage(hothela) and these 'dithelo' were stolen goods. A boy stole his father's tobacco or kept part of his evening meals to give to 'mmampodi' on the following day. To be a 'mmampodi' he must have beaten each one of them in a stick-fight(hokalla). The literal meaning of 'hokgwatha' is 'to scratch the ground with the finger nails'. Among the Basotho a male child was like a bird(tsirwane) which could be struck by anyone who wanted to do so. He is also referred to as 'pholo yaletlaka' (an ox meant to be killed in the battle and be eaten by vultures). The feminine prefix mna-(mother of) is rarely used to refer to male persons: mmabatho (Mother of the people, that is, the king) mmamphela (Mother of difficulties, of a strong ox, that is, an ardent person/man.), etc.

(7) Diboko.

9.15 This game is called the 'worms'. This is a game of touch, the last game that the children before they go to their homes at night. There are two ways, at least, of playing it. If the playmate is still nearby, he/she is touched; but if he/she is far off, some words are loudly addressed to him/her:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. Dineo! | (Hallo, Dineo) |
| B. Wee! | (Yes, I am listening) |
| A. Ke-tseo. | (There they are, that is, the worms) |
| B. Ding? | (What are 'they'?) |
| A. Diboko. | (The worms) |
| B. Ke-tsahao. | (They are yours). |

If this girl Dineo did not respond when her name was called out, she would not have been 'infested' with worms. But she was cleverer by asking what she was being given, and the initiator being off her guard, replied by mentioning^{ing} the name 'diboko'. That was enough to return these worms to her. So Dineo retired happily without the 'worms'. As far as the 'touching' version of this game is concerned, the toucher simultaneously shouts:

Ke-tsahao. (They are yours).

The one who has been 'touched' chases the 'toucher' in an attempt to return these worms to the initiator. If the toucher cannot run fast, she merely sits down; and in that position she cannot be 'touched' with worms. In some areas she holds the hair in the centre(fontanel) of her head with all the fingers of one hand; this also immunises her.

9.16 If the girls want to continue with the game, they surround mmadibokwana (mother of the little worms) and tease(phephetsa) her by chanting:

Mmadibokwana, qhanyatsa, qhanyatsa!
(Mother of the worms, crush the, crush them)

Hadimoje, qhanyatsa, qhanyatsa!
(Let them eat her, crush them, crush them)

Dimototetse, qhanyatsa, qhanyatsa!
(The are overwhelming her, crush them, crush them)

Mohats'amasumo, qhanyatsa, qhanyatsa!
(The spouse of the cobra, crush them, crush them.)

The ideophone '-qhanya' means to 'burst open'. So the verb -qhanyatsa is quite nauseating and the one 'infested' by the 'worms' becomes the laughing-stock of the group. She tries hard to transfer them to any other girl to save herself this embarrassment. If she succeeds, she shouts:

Disetse lewena.(They have remained with you).

Then they all disappear. Some spent sleepless nights with worms.

9.17 The belief in 'magic touch' is still rife among the Basotho today. They refuse to be patted by anyone suspected of practising witchcraft. The belief is that in that way some malady is put into the body of the one so touched. But the children, in their games made provision for 'immunisation' against ailments. By merely sitting down a player is immuned. This compares very well with what is called 'horoba dithakgisa' (to break the doctored pegs), i.e., to sit down of a woman or girl visiting any home. She cannot leave any home without sitting down first, even if it is just to bend the knees and touch the floor only; that is enough. The cobra (masumo) is well-known as a poisonous snake and the children may not risk going close to it. Therefore this girl who has 'worms' is taboo, and nobody wants to get close to her too.

(8) Mmamolatasadi.

9.18 This is not a game in ^{the} true sense of the word, but children being what they are, have turned it into one. Mmamolatasadi is a child who is so fond of food that she would not go to her home before the children of the home she is visiting have been given their meals, so that she may share with them. The housewife may send her away so that her children may eat while she is still away. This is what she says to her:

Eya obitse mmamolatasadi ore:

(Go and call Mmamolatasadi by saying)

Hoajewa, oatingwa.

(It is being eaten and nothing is kept for you).

The visitor's own mother may do likewise when meal-time draws near and one of her children is still out. She will send one of the children to go and call her, using the same words. Words like hokgala (to crave for somebody's food), hokokela (to sit waiting for), hotswa pelo (to covet), etc are used on gluttons.

(9) Mmasekeikei.

9.19 In this game the children sit flat on the ground with legs astride one behind the other in a row. This place is supposed to be the chief's kraal and these children are his sheep. The chief comes to the sheep and checks them by pushing their heads to and fro sideways repeating these words:

Mmasekeikei, (Mmasekeikei)
Mmasekgaola-molala, (The cutter of the neck)
Mmasekeikei,
Mmasekgaola-molala,
Aedike-dike-dike, (She sinks it, sinks it, sinks it)
Aelahlele kwana. (She throws it away)
Aedike-dike-dike,
Aelahlele kwana.

These words suggest that the butcher would come over to cut off the necks of these sheep with a knife several times until the heads are severed and the sheep is pushed aside dead. Immediately after this, someone arrives and says to the chief:

- A. Morena, morena, ketlil'oqela nku.
(King, king, I have come to ask for a sheep)
B. Ela yamaobane oeisitse kae?
(What have you done with that one of yesterday?)
A. Etlotse lesaka, yapjheha madi.
(It jumped over the wall and purged blood)
B. Enke ke-yeo ka-sakeng.
(Take it, there it is in the kraal).

Then this butcher takes it (one of the children) and 'it' hops on one leg to the butcher's kraal where it is 'slaughtered' by a 'karate' blow on the neck. This child falls down and pretends to be dead. This goes on until the sheep are finished and all are revived to start the game afresh.

9.20 In Afrikaans a yoke-pin is called 'skei' but it seems the name 'Mmasekeikei' cannot be pinned down to that origin. As the game deals with the severing or cutting off of the necks, it would rather be related to the Afrikaans word 'afskei' (parting, etc.) The ideophonic origin of this name cannot, however, be totally ruled out, more so because of the repetition of the ideophone 'dike' (to sink deep). Once the neck of an animal has been cut off, the tendency is to push it aside and allow the blood to flow out freely (holahlela kwana). The clotted blood (bobete) is a tasty dish of the Basotho. In the social organization of the Basotho the booty cattle after the war went into the chief's kraal and he was free to divide the spoils with his men. So it is not unusual for a man to approach the chief and ask to be given a cow. 'Mafisa' is a custom whereby the chief (or anybody else) puts an animal in the care of one of his men who benefits from its produce, while the offspring belongs to the chief. It was a way of fighting poverty and malnutrition among the people. The doctrine of animalism is clearly depicted in this game, the children are treated as sheep and led away to be slaughtered. A blow on the neck is known to be deadly even by the children. What is even surprising is the 'revival' of the head sheep. In the game of Diboko (worms) described above, one becomes a tabooed person until one succeeds in touching another, who becomes tabooed in turn, and the first is restored to his own personality. There is a strong possibility of this game of Diboko having developed from the tabooing of people suffering from certain diseases or subjected to some special ancestral punishment. There are boys' games which the girls may not play and vice versa. This is taboo, and an infringement of such stipulations can lead to very serious repercussions at once or later in life, it is believed.

CHAPTER TEN.

NATURAL PHENOMENA GAMES.

10.1 Whereas phenology deals with the times of recurring natural phenomena especially in relation to climatic conditions, these games involve a simple Basotho attitude towards such phenomena as the moon, the sun, the clouds, etc. Basotho children had their peculiar and queer beliefs about these things. A child who counted the stars would wet his bed in his sleep (horotela tlung). A whirlwind (setsokotsane) was always to go to the Ndebele country (Haseye Matebeleng!). Lightning was so feared that the children would advise one another not to expose their teeth lest they attracted the lightning (hobitsa maru). If one killed a lizard (mokgodutswane) and left it lying up-side-down, that is, with the whiteness of its belly exposed, then lightning would hit or enter his home (hobetsa/kena habo). One who sees a star shooting across the sky is considered lucky because he has seen the witch (moloi) or wizard who was coming to bewitch him, and he has to shout: Phoa....moloi towe!

(Be ashamed, you wizard!)

The name 'tladi-mothwana' for lightning clearly explains their belief in the presence of a little man inside the flash.

(1) Kuruetso.

10.2 This noun is derived from the ideophone 'kuru' which is interpreted as the 'babbling of the baby'. This game is a form of initiation. There are two types of this game in which children take an active part:

(i) Kuruetso ka-kgwedi.

This game is usually played when the moon is full (hotoloka), bright and still on the eastern side. A baby about two months old is taken outside for the first time in the company of the young children of the village. The woman (good-mannered one)

who is carrying the baby in her arms shows the baby the moon shouting, as she points:

Kururu! kururu! molekan'ao ke-yaane.

(Alas, alas, your equal is that yonder one)

The children also shout the same words as ^{they} jumped around the woman and the baby. The baby is supposed to have seen the moon.

There are variations in the words used, for example, Sekese³⁸) writes:

Kururu! kururu! molekan'a hao ke elwa.

The meaning, however, is still the same. The above words are used in the case of a male child. For the baby girls the words are:

Kururu! kururu! bona thaka hao ke-yane.

(Alas, alas, look there is your companion)

The significance of this game is that henceforth the baby can be taken outside the house but not beyond the 'seotlwana'. It can be deduced that the baby's eyes are being 'tuned up' for the stronger rays of the sun in this game.

(ii) Kuruetso ka-pula.

This is initiation by rain. Not a drop of rain must fall on the baby before this ceremonial game. It is believed that if this could be allowed to happen then the child would be possessed of thieving propensities. When the rain is about to fall, children are invited to take part in this game. Just when the first drops start falling someone takes the naked baby and places it on its back outside in the lelapa (courtyard). When the baby cries, the children run around it mocking it in these words:

Shodu ke-leo, haiaha! (There's the thief, alas)

Shodu ke-leo, ke-leo. (The thief is that one, that one).

When enough raindrops have fallen on the baby, it is removed and taken back into the house. Many a mother cannot stand the cry of their babies, therefore they are not allowed nearby.

³⁹) Sekese, 1944, par. 8, p.10.

10.3 The following possessive constructions have to be examined to see which one is correct:

molekan'ao / molekan'ahao (from molekane wahao).

For euphonic reasons the former is the accepted and used form. In the same way 'thaka yahao' is shortened to thak'ahao and not thak'ao. The difference in meaning between 'molekane' (equal) and 'thaka' (a contemporary) is negligible yet the latter is fast being claimed for use when females are involved, for example, Thakane is a girl's name. Although the demonstratives leno and leo are interchangeable, there exists some special semantic preferences in their use:

leshodu ke-leno. (the thief is that one/there is the thief),

leshodu ke-leo. (the thief is coming) - even when not seen,

leshodu ke-leo? (is that the thief?) - he must be visible.

What is being illustrated here is that the form without -n- is preferable in questions, and that these second position demonstratives can also mean the person or thing 'is coming'. Although the distances between the demonstrative positions are not fixed, these words may not be used indiscriminately and out of their usual order or sequence, that is, lena will always be a position nearer to the speaker than leno/leo.

(2) Lerunyana.

10.4 A small cloud. In winter when the weather is cold, children like to bask in the sun. If the clouds must come floating and cover the sun partially so that they do not receive its rays, they chant :

Runyana, runyana lela (That yonder small cloud)

Nkaleja, nkaleqeta. (I can eat and finish it up).

This is done until the sun shines again. Every child there must join in the chanting of this wishful rhyme. This rhyme is not

chanted when the sky is overcast. Sekese³⁹⁾ has a different version:

Runyana, runyana lela,	(That yonder small cloud)
Nkaleja, nkaleja,	(I can eat it, I can eat it)
Nkalera kome!	(I can swallow it up)
Halena mosa.	(It has no kindness)
Nkaleja, nkaleja,	(I can eat it, I can eat it)
Nkalere kome!	(I can swallow it up.)

However both versions convey the same message. The repetition expresses their innermost feeling about the cruelty of this unimportant cloud which hides the sun. The suffix -nyana is principally used in a derogatory sense. The ideophone kome is the source of the verb -kometsa (swallow up). These children do not underestimate their potentialities, hence the constant use of -ka- in most of these lines. What offends them more is the alternation of heat and cold as the clouds pass before the sun. The demonstrative lela shows that they were aware of the remoteness of the clouds from them.

(3) Letsatsi.

10.5 This game is usually referred to as 'Letsatsi, pina ya-bashanyana lebanana' (The Sun, song of boys and girls). In contrast with the game 'Lerunyana' above, on a hot day the children pray for the 'shadow' of the clouds:

Riti, riti, tloo kwano,	(Shadow, shadow come here)
Bana bahao ba-batle.	(Your children are good.)
Tsatsi, tsatsi, eya kwana,	(Sun, sun go away)
Bana bahao ba-babe.	(Your children are bad.)

This is one of the most beautiful pieces of poetry in the S. Sotho language because of its naturally rhythmic movement (as if the syllables have been counted), its alliteration, its effective

⁴⁰⁾ Sekese, 1944, par. 74, p. 51.

repetitions, its parallelism and its balanced parts. It is a rhyme par excellence. There is personification where Seriti and Letsatsi are directly addressed, and metonymy where sun is used for heat. It is difficult to guess the prefix of riti because of the two possibilities seriti(shadow) and moriti(shade). The solution can, however be found in the fact already stated above that the se- prefix can be omitted but not the mo- one. The absence of concords also aggravated the problem because both Riti and Tsatsi have been personified. Note ba- in bahao. The repetition of the addressee is to make sure that he/she hears. The logic of the reasons forwarded for beckoning and expulsion is very clear and straightforward. The contrast between kwano(towards the speaker) and kwana(away from the speaker) is also very effectively rendered. In fact, with kwana a very dauntless attitude is revealed because the location is not clearly stipulated or defined, it is an 'I-don't-care-where' attitude. The metaphor in 'bana bahao' brings to the fore another important semantic interpretation of the noun 'bana', not 'children' but the 'results', 'outcome', 'consequences', etc. The adjectival stems -tle and -be represent all that is virtuous and vicious respectively. 'Seriti' also refers to 'human dignity'.

(4)Kgwedi.

10.6 Basotho also appreciate the beauty of the moon(kgwedi) and spend long hours admiring it. Sometimes they even recognize certain images on its surface, such as a man carrying a bundle of firewood, a man leading a donkey, etc. These are possibly foreign influences(biblical?). Then they sing praises to the 'queen of the sky':

Kgwedi ke-ela,	(The moon is yonder there)
Toloka, toloka.	(Become full, become full)
Haena mosa,	(It has no kindness)

Toloka, toloka.	(Become full, become full)
Mosa wayona,	(Its kindness)
Toloka, toloka,	(Become full, become full)
Eka wantja.	(Is like that of a dog)
Toloka, toloka!	(Become full, become full).

The children's movements here are contrasted. They stop to point at or say something about the moon, but when they come to the words 'toloka', they gallop or stampede around. The stoppages punctuate the gallops while the words 'toloka,toloka' punctuate the theme or story. These words further form a parentheses between 'Mosa wayona' and 'Eka wantja' - a single sentence. Such interpolations accomodate dramatic action very well in these children's games.

10.7 The significance of the rhyme is to express the wish that the fulness of the moon should bring the same fulness(growth) to the children. But their growth seems to be taking so long that the young ones lose heart. The kindness of the moon is likened unto that of the dog which is very unreliable - one moment it wags its tail, and the next one it shows its teeth. The moon is considered selfish by enjoying the fulness alone. The Hlonepha word for kgwedi(moon/month),namely ngwedi has now become a new word which means 'moonlight', hence 'senakangwedi'(the one that dances by the moonlight = the glow-worm).

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

ANIMAL IMITATION GAMES.

11.1 Curtis⁴¹⁾ quotes the German educationist, Groos as saying that 'the animal does not play because it is young, but it rather has a period of infancy in order that it may play, and in that play may be prepared for its life activities'. A kitten that jumps upon a rolling ball is training to catch mice when it is an adult. Play and imitation are the best methods of education with the human beings too. The children like to imitate so much that their childhood is a period of life which consists of imitative actions of different events in life. They like to personate the animals.

(1) Seotsanyana.

11.2 The bird 'seotsanyana' (windhover or sparrow-hawk) is also known among the children as 'Nkopele' (Flap the wings for me). Seotsanyana is the diminutive of 'seodi' (lammervanger). In the late afternoon when these birds go home to roost, the herdboys on their way home usually stop and sing to these hovering birds:

Seotsanyana, nkopele, (Windhover, flap for me)

Lenna ketlaoopela. (I will also clap hands for you).

This is repeated several times with this bird hovering above their heads in acknowledgement of the request. Boys are known to have fought over the ownership of a very responsive bird and to have fallen into dishes while gazing at seotsanyana. Imitation is embodied in the similarity of the actions, that is, the fluttering of wings and the clapping of hands.

⁴¹⁾ Curtis, 1917, p.3.

(2)Leeba.

11.3 There are two types of these birds which the boys like to imitate, namely, the turtle dove(leeba-kgorwana) and the rock pigeon(leeba). The latter is sometimes called by its nickname 'lekunkurwana' from the sound it makes:

Kun.....kuru! Kun.....kuru!

This is repeated differently at different tempos. Some interpret this sound as:

Huku....thu! Huku.....thu!

Little boys usually play with their 'tails'(genitals), and as soon as they hear the cooing of 'leeba' they stop because it is supposed to be saying:

Kun.....kuru! kun... ku...ru!

Obapala ka-mpipana?(Are you playing with your 'tail'?)

Boys like to imitate the turtle dove especially when it woos its mate. The interpretation is:

Ha-ke-battle puo..... (I don't want an argument)

Ru...ri, ru...ri. (Indeed, indeed)

(3)Kokolofitwe.

11.4 When the boys praise the heron they call it 'nonyana yamatsheng'(a bird of the lakes) because it wades in the water. As its neck is conspicuous and locomotive the boys imitate it whenever they see this bird:

Kokolofitwe! (Hallo, heron)

Holla molala. (Stretch out your neck)

(4)Kgocho.

11.5 This is the domestic fowl. It is the cocks that the children imitate. One cock asks the other a question and the other

one answers:

A. Kokolo.....koloo..... (Hallo there!)

Lemao laPhakwe lekae? (Where is the hawk's needle?)

B. Hakees'olebo.....ne. (I have not yet seen it).

The explanation is that the hen one day visited the hawk, her brother (in those good old days) and borrowed his needle. After using it, she dropped it, and she could not find it. Thinking that she threw it on the ash-heap with the rubbish she swept in her hut, she went to look for it there. That is supposed to be the reason why the fowls scratch any ash-heap they come across. They are still looking for this needle. That is also the reason why the hawk kills the chicks up to the present day.

(5) Motobatsi.

11.6 In the evening when the cat mews outside the children interpret this as:

Diau, Diau, (Old man, Old man)

Ontabolela dikobo. (You are tearing my blankets).

The personal name Diau is so Sothoised that its Afrikaans origin was contested by my informants. (Cp Die Ou). The sarcasm in these lines is self-evident. A cat is commonly called 'Katse', the ideophonic interpretation of the Afrikaans 'kat'.

(6) Tshemedi.

11.7 The butcher bird is well-known for killing the smaller birds, frogs, lizards, locusts, etc and planting them on the sharp thorns of the trees to dry up for future use. Boys like this bird because they always rob its storage of the edible birds. Usually after piercing its victim through a sharp thorn this bird perches itself on the highest branch and chirps. The boys interpret this as follows:

Moshemane wasetsoha-bosiu, (The early-rising boy)

Mona sefateng hase-monate (Here in the tree things are not nice)

Ke-mowe...we,ke-mowe...we! (They are very, very nice).

The literal meaning of 'hotsoha bosiu' is 'to get up at night'.

This truly means that one gets up while it is still night, very early at dawn. To express the truth in negative terms is very common S.Sotho habit, for example:

hahobate, hahobate: it is not cold².(it is extremely cold),

hakealapa, hakealapa:I'm not hungry²(I'm very hungry), etc.

The ideophone 'mowewe' refers to 'whispering', so tshemedi is only whispering to them about the niceties he has stored for himself in the tree, they will pass down the throat like the 'wind', just slipping down!

(7)Tau.

11.8 Motsatse⁴²⁾ thinks the lion says:

Mme lentate, (Father and mother)

Moholwane lekgaitsemi,(Elder brother and sister)

Baile, bashwele, (They are gone, they are dead)

Kesetse-kere: (I've remained saying:)

Tum-tutu,tu-tutu,tu-tututu!(Roaring,roaring,roaring).

⁴²⁾Motsatse, 1950, p.27.

CHAPTER TWELVE.

TRANSFORMATION AND APPLICATION.

12.1 In the preceding chapters of this study the traditional games of the S.Sotho children have been presented in a written form and translated in many ways. Now three fundamental questions remain: (1)How do we deal with the material presented to us? (2)What characteristics do we abstract from this material? and (3)How do we relate these characteristics to each other and to the ones we know already? The merit of such abstraction is that these characteristics can be used in other contexts.

12.2 We have already noted that these games form a branch of the S.Sotho traditional lore. By reducing them to writing we have changed them from oral to written form. Now our next step is to prove their 'literatureship'. Lestrade⁴⁵⁾ divides S.A. Bantu literature into three main categories,namely, (1)works which, though written in Bantu languages, do not express original Bantu thought(translations, adaptations,etc), (2) works which, though conceived by Bantu, and though containing much that is Bantu in thought and expression, are nevertheless conditioned mainly by the impact of western civilisation on Bantu life,and (3)products of Bantu literary genius functioning either in the complete absence of non-Bantu influence or in fundamental independence of such influence. Most, if not all, of these games belong to this last mentioned division. But the earliest writers never recognised them as part of literature.What is left to be done now is not to find the reason why but to show why they should have been regarded as literature in the true sense of the word. This study must now reveal their literary form and show how they can be converted

⁴⁵⁾Lestrade, 1950 p. 291 et seq.

into a literature; and present them as writings(now) whose value lies in beauty of form or emotional effect, as a treatment of a particular subject or topic and as written compositions of the kind valued for their form and content. Those are, ofcourse, the most important ingredients of good literature.

Interrogative Constructions.

12.3 The sequence of words in a sentence hinges from not only their grammaticalness but also from their resultant meaning. The following questions appear in these games:

Yeo ke-mang?(p.15 par.3.5-1)

Otswa kae? (p.53 par. 5.2.)

Letshaba'ng? (p.114 par. 9.10)

Ding? (p.117 par. 9.15)

They have one thing in common, namely, that the interrogative word occupies the final position. In some cases the asking word is merged with the preceding predicate to form an enclitic construction. The full form of the third question is 'Letshaba eng?'. It must also be pointed out that the locative interrogative -kae? is hokae? in full. Ding? is a single word question. All these are meaningful and some of them like 'Se-mang?'(p.111 par. 9.6) appear in some classic S.Sotho works like Mofolo's Chaka(p.69 of the 1962 edition). The English equivalent of the first question is 'Who is this one?' and the logical answer 'This one is Mala-tadiana'. This means English answers are the reverse form of the questions. S.Sotho merely substitutes the answer for the asking word in the same position. Nonsense constructions like 'Mang ke-yeo??, 'Kae otswa?', etc are unacceptable.

Identifying Copulatives.

12.4 It is a common occurrence in S.Sotho to find two parts in apposition balancing on a copular formative ke-. These games contain many such constructions:

Tlhapi ke-noha (p.47 par. 4.16),

Yeo ke-mang? (p.15 par. 3.5-i), etc

If these balancing parts are in apposition they should be equal and contrastable, still conveying the same meaning like:

Ntate ke-moruti(Father is a teacher) and

Moruti ke-ntate(The teacher is father)

But this is not always the case. The sentences may appear correct grammatically while they are either nonsense or meaningless. The original meaning is very often lost in such contrasts:

'Tlhapi ke-noha' means 'a fish resembles a snake as a reptile'. On the other hand 'Noha ke-tlhapi' means 'if you can eat fish, eat the snake as well'. The reason for this difference in meaning is simply that the latter portion of the construction is qualificative: Ntate is described or qualified by 'ke-moruti'. So the same is true when the parts are contrasted. This study wishes to lay emphasis on this fact and to expand further :

Ntate ke-yarutang (Father is the one who teaches),

Ntate yarutang (A father who teaches).

In the first phrase the construction is still copulative but in the second one it is relative, yet semantically they qualify. In

Yarutang ke-ntate (The one who teaches is father)

the relative replaces the noun and now clearly reveals its pronominal features. This functional shift is very important in S.Sotho although it has hitherto not been given prominence. With

S.Sotho copular constructions we proceed from the unknown to the known, from the particular to the general, from the peculiar to the familiar, etc:

Ntja ke-phoofolo, (A dog is an animal),

Basotho ke-batho,etc (Basotho are people).

Once this order is reversed the original meaning is changed:

Phoofolo ke-ntja (A good animal is the dog),

Batho ke-Basotho (Those worthy of the name 'people' are the Basotho),etc.

Poetic Value of Games.

12.5 The Basotho consider their praise-poems as the 'highest products of their literary art'. Basotho children learn poetry at an early age in the form of clan praises we dealt with in Chapter 5 above. Most of the Kgati rhymes and the lullabies are of a very high poetic value and form. We shall now examine a few excerpts from these games to note the poetic features in them.

(a) In Mokoko walla (p.46 par.4.16) there is repetition followed by a refrain or chorus. Such repetition also appears disguised in some constructions such as: Makukutwane, where the very noun is in apposition to 'Ngwan'amalome'. Even the other parts of speech are found in apposition in many games. Note in Makukutwane:

Onkisa kae,

Lapeng lammao?

The underlined parts refer to one and the same thing. Then there is linking in the following lines:

Mmao oaloya,

Oloya ka'ng?

Ka-tjhiritjhiri,

Tlhare sabaloi.

Nna hakeje tlhapi,

Tlhapi ke-noha,

Noha yametsi, etc

Parallelism is clearly illustrated in Mmangwane(p.46 par.4.16-2):

Mmangwane,

Mmangwane,

Mmangwane otshwerwe ke-ditaola.

This technique is found in most of the totemic games:

Motho waha-MmaPudum'aDijana,

Motho waha-mohlamu omofubedu tlere! (p.55 par. 5.4-i)

Chiasmus or cross-parallelism appears in these games:

Mofokeng waMmaPule teleka-batho,

Teleka bommatsebe-dimorwerwe, (p.55 par. 5.4-ii)

To prove our point here it will be necessary to quote a few well-known works written by S.Sotho authors:

(a) Mangwaela⁴⁶:

Ntwa yaDithunya.

Kwena yasheba ka-har'abodiba,

Yasheba ka-mahlo amafubedu,

Bashanyana ba Makgowa bawela,

Bashanyana bawetse hanong lanoha;

Noha entsho, kganyapa yamorena,

Mmane yaohlatsa!

In lines 1 & 2 we have chiasmus(yasheba), in 3 & 4 parallelism (Bashanyana), and in 4 & 5 linking(noha).

(b) Bereng⁴⁷:

Tlhaho yaMoshweshwe.

Ka-diketso ratseba tlhaho yaThesele,

Hoba mohla lehlahang, Letlama laMokgatjhane,

Mohla ahlahang ditjhaba rathaba,

Mohla abileng teng Morena Lepoqo,

⁴⁶) Mangwaela, 1965, p.70,

⁴⁷) Bereng, 1950, p.3.

Rabina pina resaka-radiitse,

Rabina resaka-ratseba,

Ratjekwa ke-barweetsana dikgarebe.

In lines 1 & 2 (Thesele and Letlama) we have chiasmus, which also appears in lines 2 & 3 (mohla ahlahang), 5 & 6 are parallel lines. This comparison suffices to prove our assertion that S. Sotho children's games provide the source from which Basotho poets originate. It has already been stated that the content of these games, as well as that of the well-known written poetic works, refer to the history, the culture, the religion, and - in one word - the life of the Basotho.

Interposing and Concorde.

12.6 A construction Ngwan'arae emoholo (p.15 par.3.5-i) is in full Ngwana warae emoholo. The insertion of the possessor 'warae' does not obliterate the fact that 'Ngwana' is the subject and the concord must agree with it. By deletion Ngwana emoholo is still acceptable. The reversed version Emoholo ngwan'arae is emphatic and does not change the meaning of the original. In S. Sotho this is not only applicable to the shorter constructions but also to the longer ones. By expansion:

Ngwana wabatho bafihlang emoholo,

Ngwan'arae yeo osamotsebeng emoholo, etc

But once an object (noun), especially of the same number and class is introduced, some doubt arises as to which of the two nouns govern the concord:

Ngwan'arae yabolaileng motho emoholo

This may mean 'His father's eldest child who has killed a man' or 'His father's child who has killed an adult person'. At an early age Basotho children master this manipulation of concords because in their games we find further complicated examples:

Manemane, malematsela,

Malematshimo ka-mmoho,

Asaephophothe. (p.56 par. 5.4-iii)

The concord of manemane is a- and of tshimo is e-.

Motho waha-MmaSesane'aNkope,

Ere ha atlashwa, apongwe hlooho,

Asale akunyakunya ka-mahetla. (p.65 par. 5.11-i)

All the underlined concords refer to the subject motho, and none to the nouns hlooho and mahetla. The last example is more complicated by its reference to an antecedent which has not been given previously:

Lekolokotwana laha-Mmmatshola-nku,

Oentshe masapong,

Retleretsebe hoeja hamonate. (p. 67 par. 5.11-iv)

While the concord e- refers to the noun nku, the concords o- and re- are understood to refer to motho and Lekolokotwana & Co. respectively. Children's game do contain serious literature.

One of the longest sentences in Mofolo's Chaka appears on page 84:

'Motsotsonyana, Mangwane ha autlwa lerata lehlomolang pelo ka-haae, ahetla, abona lefofo leleholo lametse yabona etjhang, abona lebana lebasadi babona batletsatletse dithota lemaralla, hoitse sai hobaleha; yaba banyahama dipelo.....'

Mofolo, who had been using the correct SC a- for Mangwane strikes a false note when at the end he uses ba-. Once a mistake is made with the concords the meaning is lost. Children's games acquit themselves well in this respect.

Some Peculiar Constructions.

12.7 There are still many other constructions which appear in these games but have not been dealt with because of the size of this study. To round these observations, however, the following complex and peculiar sentences must receive attention:

Doublets.

Oalla, oathola (p. 106, par. 9.2.)

These two predicates express one action of this child, namely, that of alternating crying and keeping quiet, and they are, therefore, parallel clauses. The question here is how to give the negative form of such contradictory expressions. In this example the negative cannot be:

Haalle, haathole.

In such cases the first predicate must not be negated but the second one:

Oalla, haathole.

The reason for this is not far to seek. It is impossible to say:

Haalle, oathola

because the child must cry first in order to stop crying! This is a common device in proverbs and contraformal constructions:

'Hahobate, hahobate' means it is extremely cold,

'Haamotle, haamotle' means she is exceptionally beautiful,

'Hadishwe ka-qhwa lele-leng' does not necessarily mean they need more than one 'maqhwa' to die, but they take turns to die. Every dog has his day.

'Banna batshwana ka-ditedu feela': The emphasis is on the differences other than the 'beards'.

'Hofa ke-hoipehela' : How can one save by giving away? But those one gives today are obliged to give one tomorrow.

Fowler⁴⁸⁾ clearly explains this when he writes 'It is parallel clauses that especially provide opportunities for going wrong. the problem being to secure that if both are negative the negative force shall not be dammed up in one alone, & conversely that if one only is to be negative the negative force shall not be free to spill over into the other.' These must not be confused with predicates in which deficient verbs are involved:

Kefihletse ditshwene dija morollwane (p.28 par.3.30)

Although the finite verb is -ja all negatives are acceptable:

Kefihletse ditshwene disaje morollwane,

Hakeafihlela ditshwene dija morollwane, and

Hakeafihlela ditshwene disaje morollwane.

Deficient se-.

Kese-kelebone = Hakeeso-lebone (p.130 par.11.5)

What is important here is that the verb is in the perfect and the meaning 'I have already seen it' against 'I have not yet seen it'. These too must not be confused with the exclusive se- which is inchoative: Kese-kelebona (I am now seeing it) against

Kese-kesalebone (I am now not seeing it).

Both 'I have never seen it' and 'I have not yet seen it' could be rendered as 'Hakeeso-lebone' in S.Sotho.

The -re tense forms.

'Ilare keqotsula (Eile-yare keqotsula) (p.44 par.4.13-ii)

The verb stem -re(say) is capable of adopting different forms in accordance with the different tenses:

⁴⁸⁾ Fowler, H.W. 1950, pp. 373 - 374.

pres. ere keoqotsula (it happens that when I pull you out),
 perf. eitse keoqotsula(it happened that when I pulled you out),
 narr. yare keoqotsula(it did happen that when I pulled you out),
 fut. etlare keoqotsula(it will happen that when I pull you out),
 pot. ekare keoqotsula(it may happen that when I pull you out),
 hab. eyere keoqotsula(it usually happens that when I pull you out),
 ne-. enere keoqotsula(it once happened that when I pulled you out),
 sa-. esare keoqotsula(it happened that while I was still pulling),
 tswa. etsware keoqotsula(it happened while I was pulling you out).
 These -re forms could be applied to any sentence to bring about
 the desired difference in meaning.

Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases.

12.8 S.Sotho has various ways of expressing the above ideas but
 no grammarian of note has accepted the presence of prepositions
 in this language. The obvious reason for this is the unfavourable
 comparison of S.Sotho in particular and the other Bantu languages
 in general with the non-Bantu languages like English. From these
 games there is enough material to challenge this cherished super-
 stition. We are aware of the immense pains that are daily being
 expended in changing spontaneous into artificial S.Sotho.

hotswa ka-diphahlo(p.45 par.4.15-6):to go out by means of clothes,
 hotswa ka-monyako :to go out through the door
 hotswa ka-lebelo :to go out at speed,
 hotswa ka-bosiu :to go out in the night,
 hotswa ka pele :to go out in front,
 hotswa ka-masimong:to come from the lands,etc

In addition to these we could add the following:

Reye ha-Shokgwe:Let us go to Shokgwe's home(p.28 par 3.30),
Ha-Shokgwe haho-motho :At Shokgwe's there is nobody(p.28 par.3.30)
 Thiba ka-monwana : Prevent the blow with your finger(p.37par.4.4),

Keratwa ke-malome: I am loved by my uncle(p.81 par.6.2),

Okene le-kae? : You entered through where?(lit.)(p.83 par.6.4),

Lempeile ka-makgethe:You have placed me with care(p.85 par.6.6)

Aqabane ka-lehaheng:They are quarreling in the cave(p.96 par.7.15)

E-ka-ho-lefe?:It is in to which one?(lit.)(p.98 par.8.2),etc.

It has to be pointed out that a S.Sotho 'preposition' may have several meanings depending upon the context in which it appears:

ka- :Bua ka-ditau = Speak about the animals,

Seha ka-thipa = Cut with a knife,

Robala ka-bōsiu = Sleep at night,

Batho ba-ka-tlung = People are in the house,

Hlodisa ka-lesoba = Peep through the hole.

ho- :Reya ho-moruti = We are going to the minister,

Retswa ho-moruti = We come from the minister.

The prepositional phrases include,inter alia,

hodima thaba :on/on top of the mountain,

tlasa sefate :under/underneath/below/beneath the tree,

pela ntlo :near/in front of the house,

hara batho :among/in the middle of the people,

mora lemati :behind the door,

mora kopano ::after the meeting,

hodima dihlooho:above the heads,

haufi lethaba:near(to) the mountain,

pele ho-morena:before the king,

dipakeng tsabona:between them, etc.

It is not being foolhardy to point out these things because their existence cannot be denied and they are in current use in our everyday speech.The above arrangement shows how this material could be classified.Even the children use them correctly.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs.

12.9 Doke and Mofokeng⁴⁹⁾ define transitive verbs as those that 'need an object to complete their action'. On the other hand they say the Intransitive verbs are 'self-contained in their action'. Definitions like these leave much to be desired these days. The question can immediately be asked whether -ja is transitive or intransitive. Could 'Monna oaja' and 'Monna oja nama' be cited as good examples of the above definitions? In these games there are many such constructions which need some definition:

Kgomo ehatile Motjhano mono (p.57 par.5.4.-v)

These are the indirect and the direct object respectively. They follow a transitive verb '-hatile'. But the following are not transitive:

Hoajewa, oatingwa (p.119 par.9.18): passive,

Baile, bashwele (p.131, par.11.8) : stative,

Onkisa kae? (p.47 par.4.16-4) : locative,

Letshetse jwang? (p.47 par.4.16-4): adverbial(manner), etc

Probably the definition of the Fowlers⁵⁰⁾ will throw more light on this problem when they define an object as 'person or thing to which action or feeling is directed' and in grammar 'noun or noun-equivalent governed by active transitive verb or preposition'. I have underlined these two words to stress a slightly different interpretation to that by Doke and Mofokeng above. A well-known grammarian Tesniere calls the substantives linked to the predicate 'actants' e.g. Monna onwa jwala. Louw⁵¹⁾ disagrees and calls them 'assistive' and 'factive' respectively. He gives as his

⁴⁹⁾ Doke and Mofokeng, 1957, p.437 par 825,

⁵⁰⁾ Fowler and Fowler, 1956, pp. 814 - 815,

⁵¹⁾ Louw, 1971, p.10.

reasons the fact that a subject(substantive) assists the action indicated by the predicate, and that the object indicates the complementary fact to which the action of the predicate transists or brings forth. It is this type of polemics, as stated earlier in this study, that makes it difficult to comprehend certain new trends in linguistic development. However, it is an established fact that a noun phrase is associated with the predicated and that it should be linked with it. The differences arise when the relations of the different substantival nodes and the predicate are made. These are clearer:

Mmangwane otshwerwe ke-ditaola - inactive transitive,

Ditaola ditshwere mmangwane - active transitive.

Ntja eloma leshodu - ntja=agentive, leshodu=affective.

But the problem arises when a sentence like the following is defined: Leshodu letshaba ntja. Although leshodu is the noun subject, it is not an agent which passes fear to the object 'dog'. In fact it is affected by the fear of the dog(which generates it). Louw's nuances would have to be applied with circumspection too.

Nouns in Apposition.

12.10 There are many examples but this one will suffice:

Hlalele monna hlooho ekgolo (p.66 par.5.11)

Only the first two nouns are in apposition, but they are not the subject of this sentence. The copular concord e- agrees with 'hlooho' only. In these transforms it does not change either:

Hlooho yaHlalele monna ekgolo,

Hlooho yaHlalele ekgolo,

Hlooho yamonna ekgolo, etc

This means that the two nouns in apposition are in a possessive relationship with the rest of the sentence. As possessors they are, therefore, qualificatives, and also inseparable.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY.

1. In writing this I have become convinced that we have long neglected a source of inspiration in our modern schools. It is clear that our vernacular modern written literature in general --- not only our S.Sotho literature --- is failing in its purpose. It is not read and, above all, studied in order to enjoy and learn, and its place threatens to be that of a chore which has to be performed to pass, for example, the matric examination.

2.What then is the cultural and literary potential of these games? What do they contain of aesthetic and didactic appeal? What preparation do they provide, firstly for standards of an oral heritage and, lately, for standards of an emerging written literature? Can we make use of any part of these games in modern teaching? Can these traditional games be incorporated into a highly practical and scientifically orientated --- but essentially necessary foreign acquisition? Can they enrich the modern medium; and if they cannot do this, can they at least provide a continuity from traditional values to modern values?

3.In this summary I will now try to answer some of these questions and at the same time present some of the reasons why I have felt urged to present this material for a Master's thesis. It is hoped that a methodology for the literary study of this children's world will suggest itself, for, essentially, the content of these as games cannot be cohered simply by classifying them in accordance with their outer reference as I have done pursuing the proposals of other writers. I am convinced that we are dealing

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with a single children's world and with meritorious literary, humorous and often deep-thinking approaches to this world:

Leleng lare:

Molapo, tsoha!

Ketsohe jwang,

Kebolailwe

Ke-badisana

Baha-Sethithi? (par. 3.15, p.20)

The sequence of these childish thoughts develop well to a climax and raises an important question about resurrection among the Basotho.

4. This world is fixed in linguistic forms which merit study and which invite study for the simple reason that they are fixed. The decision to write these games in verse form hinges on several reasons. One of the guide lines is the tangible caesura found in all of them. The presence of linking words clearly showed the boundary between any two lines. This, of course, is a distinctive characteristic of the traditional S.Sotho traditional praise-poems. The average length of each type is six lines. This makes it easier to convert them to memory. Both repetition and brevity are the features of these poetic lines. Grammatical forms have been abbreviated, parts of words have been omitted, and certain concords and particles have been left out. But the key words have invariably been retained. Rhyme has been disregarded because repetitions do not, in the first place, aim at rhyme but at effect. Metrical length in those combining action and chanting has been forced, that is, more than one syllable has been chanted at one metrical point. Vocatives are commonly used to introduce a game. These and the interjectives help to create an exciting atmosphere at the games. The use of ideophones to interpret action is almost perfect. From them new words can be derived. Phraseology in most of

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these games is subtle in the absence of certain word-links common in the written forms. But this is understandable if one considers that these games are oral by origin and have the dialogue as their chief ingredient. Some controversial issues have been raised in this study to throw new light on S.Sotho linguistics. These may disillusion many well-known grammarians who may find themselves compelled to revise their already published works. If this can happen, then this study will have succeeded in one of its purposes.

5. De Cort⁵²⁾ once remarked 'zij zijn de overblijfselen van lang vervlogen dagen; zij bevatten soms woorden, waarvan de beteekenis ontsnapt, omdat men den oorsprong en de geschiedenis vandeze kinderspelen niet altijd kent; zij leven gewoonlijk voort van mond tot mond, van geslacht tot geslacht en vindt ze dikwijls in andere landen, net zooals de meeste spelen'. This reference to the obscurity of origin and meaning, and the universality of the children's games applies also to the S.Sotho traditional games which have been transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation. New vocabulary has been added to the existing lists. This is a revival of archaic words which were either being forgotten or falling into disuse. If obsolete words have semantic value they should not be allowed to disappear. The interjectives comprise a part of speech which is very difficult to translate. A serious attempt has been made in this study to give a correct interpretation of a Mosotho's feeling and intention in the use of these interjectives. The existing dictionaries cannot provide this, hence new shades of meaning have been revealed. The themes are various and cover the whole life of the Basotho from birth to death. The milieu is typically rural. The 'nqalo'(playground) was far from the

⁵²⁾ De Cort, 1929, p.10.

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village and the 'madding crowds' and the scrutinizing eyes of the adults. In S. Sotho spectators were unwanted; the rule was that all must enjoy the game in an atmosphere of happiness. The figures of speech found in these games add to the beauty of these constructions. Apostrophe starts most of them. Then there is metaphor, metonymy, euphemism, satire, sarcasm, pun, spoonerism, climax, etc. These are good devices in all languages and their exposition makes an interesting study.

6. In his discussion of the value of play Davies⁵³⁾ says 'Through play the child throughout growth meets and adjusts himself with increasing philosophy to this limitation of material world. He learns to accept frustration....'. A child learns best by imitation, and this involves the training of the whole physical body. Some embarrassing moments in these games train the children to face the strains and stresses of later life. Generally a game is expected to contain the element of winning and losing. In the S. Sotho traditional games this is not emphasized. The exclusion of such contest in favour of the appreciation of success makes all the participants enjoy their game. Although sometimes amorphous, the unwritten penalties and punishments are accepted as justified and logical. Destruction of objects has been excluded. The winning of objects, that is, disowning by contest is seldom entertained. The chief value of competition, then, is that it sets a standard of achievement. Basotho children adopt the 'try, try again' attitude in their games, and they are happier if one ultimately succeeds.

⁵³⁾ Davies, 1951, p. 29.

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7. I think by accepting the games as a window on a children's world and as providing a commentary on the passions, observations, humour, tranquility, fears and repressions that emanate from or impinge upon this world we may create a basis for a commentary and a classification. Let us beacon off some of the outer boundaries of this world in terms of commentary I have already provided in the description of each of the games. We find then the following:

- (a) that some of the games demarcate a world of personal love that is epitomized in the 'malome' relationship (p.82),
- (b) that several of the games express a yearning for growing up (tall, full, desirable), e.g., 'kgwedi' and growth (p.126), 'pula' and growth (p.83),
- (c) that the games stress certain kinds of feared circumstances e.g. 'mafiritshwane' (p.23), epidemics cf. 'kgati' (p.43),
- (d) that several games stress detestation of certain kinds of social behaviour and the converse, pride in certain achievements, e.g. cowardice (p.41), - fear of defeat met by humour, bravery (p.38) - cattle raiding,
- (e) that many of the games tend to instil observance of requisite formalities, e.g. not to fart in public (p.91), not to expose one's private parts (Kwidi - p.90),
- (f) that some games mock the odd customs, e.g. Majantja (p.88): careful selection of foodstuffs to eat and not to eat,
- (g) that some games prepare youngsters for marriage, e.g. Madimo (p.114): motherly protection, senyamo (p.111): choice of a correct life partner, and
- (h) that some games accentuate the belief in ancestors and their aid in times of distress, e.g. lesokwana (p.86): drought and barrenness, Mmangakane (p.20): famine.

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8. Then proceeding to the inner core of this world and looking at the specifically linguistic education commentary and standards provided by the games, we may now turn to those games that have a specifically linguistic setting:

(a)memory and the fixation in memory of linguistic events, e.g. Malatadiana (p.13),

(b)quick repartee or verbal response, e.g. Mokadiathole (p.28) in answer to the continuous question, O-mang?

(c)humour and humourous mockery of an opponent, e.g. setsoko-tsoko (p.43): laughter but not anger with defaulters,

(d)brevity of expression in most of these games, e.g. dilothe (p.94), which may even develop into a short story,

and, perhaps the most significant for our literary view of the subject,

(e)the poetry and historical wealth of material contained in the totemic games where pride in one's origins is linked with a beauty of expression. Let us repeat:

Kele-Mokwena waha-Kadi'abo-Tsholo,

Motho waha-Monaheng emotle,

Maila hongwathelwa,

Ngwan'amaja-hosatjhesa,

Ngwan'asajeng polokwe yamaobane! (p.62)

9. In this way we may gain insight into the gradual structuring of the values of enjoyment and play that we so sadly seem to lack in our modern novels. I seem to wonder whether somehow or somewhere we have not missed an important point in converting our spoken lore, our spoken traditions into a written literature. What are the values that are created socially, and in a literary aesthetic sense, in these games? And, to what extent can our growing literature

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be said to show continuity and transition from these values to higher and more elevated positive values? It is not enough to hate modern circumstances that areit is true..... a kind of imposition, but which, at the same time bring several benefits to us in everyday life. It is necessary to have positive cultural values to which we aspire through the literary medium, and, I submit, the creation of, the beginnings of these values lie in the childish games of our youth.

10. The values inculcated through play can be seen to be structured if we view the games as an experimental approach to the tangible and intangible cultural world around us. The mockery of odd, indecent, hated and abnormal behaviour is certainly a restriction (self-imposed by children in our case), but there are other aspects of the games that are positive and by no means restrictive. Rather do they lead to a higher appreciation of the cultural and linguistic world around us. It is this leading to higher values that is in some way structured and that will therefore lead us to a more serious study of the children's world. But the inner core lies in the particularly linguistic games for here lies the true repository of appreciation.

11. I have particularly laid stress on the often somewhat obscene references in the totemic games. Here lie some of the most wonderful linguistic means of shaping personality and character. No matter what one's origins may be..... even from a red anus or from excrement hanging on the cliffsone shows pride in the humble origin of one's family. Thus the idea of 'self-praise' is not that of boasting but rather that of praising something that may be cause for ridicule from others. The Basotho are not given to modesty in certain things, but in these things they are linguistically modest. However, in the totemic origin games we

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find that these matters are brazenly referred to (having sexual intercourse in the heat of the day, defecating in public, etc). What then can be the educational value of saying things that in normal linguistic behaviour are strictly avoided? Yes, the children's world widens to the adults' world.

12. The references are on the face of it short cuts to a complicated description. They incorporate references that are never misused in public and may be regarded as 'confidential' communications that are however linked to the strength of the family.....a family that does not have to keep cattle because it is agriculturally competent, a family that does not need to complete its hoeing because it is competent in rearing livestock, a family that may well have originated with hunters and cliff dwellers like the Bushmen, but which has a rightful place in the Sotho society, a family that makes love by daylight but is still respected in the land.

13. These and many other aspects form a fit range of subjects for study by our educationalists and particularly those concerned with developing standards and values for our new literature that could rise from the ashes of our oral lore. In many households today there are no 'grannies' to pass this oral lore to grandchildren, the children themselves have to preserve their games. In recording these games for the first time I hope that I have done something towards preserving the genre, but I hope I have done more than this in suggesting that in this material lie the beginnings of literary appreciation, as there certainly lies enjoyment of both a serious and a playful kind.

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14. Curtis⁵⁴⁾ observes that 'all games are remnants of the earlier activities of the race that have come down to us in a somewhat modified form'. I can therefore conclude by saying : I hope I have demonstrated how the games and the playful behaviour -- particularly in the linguistic sense -- may be cohered into a single subject by showing that it is a children's world created by children throughout the ages but that forms an introduction to a wider world that includes adults.

⁵⁴⁾ Curtis, 1917, p.4.

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